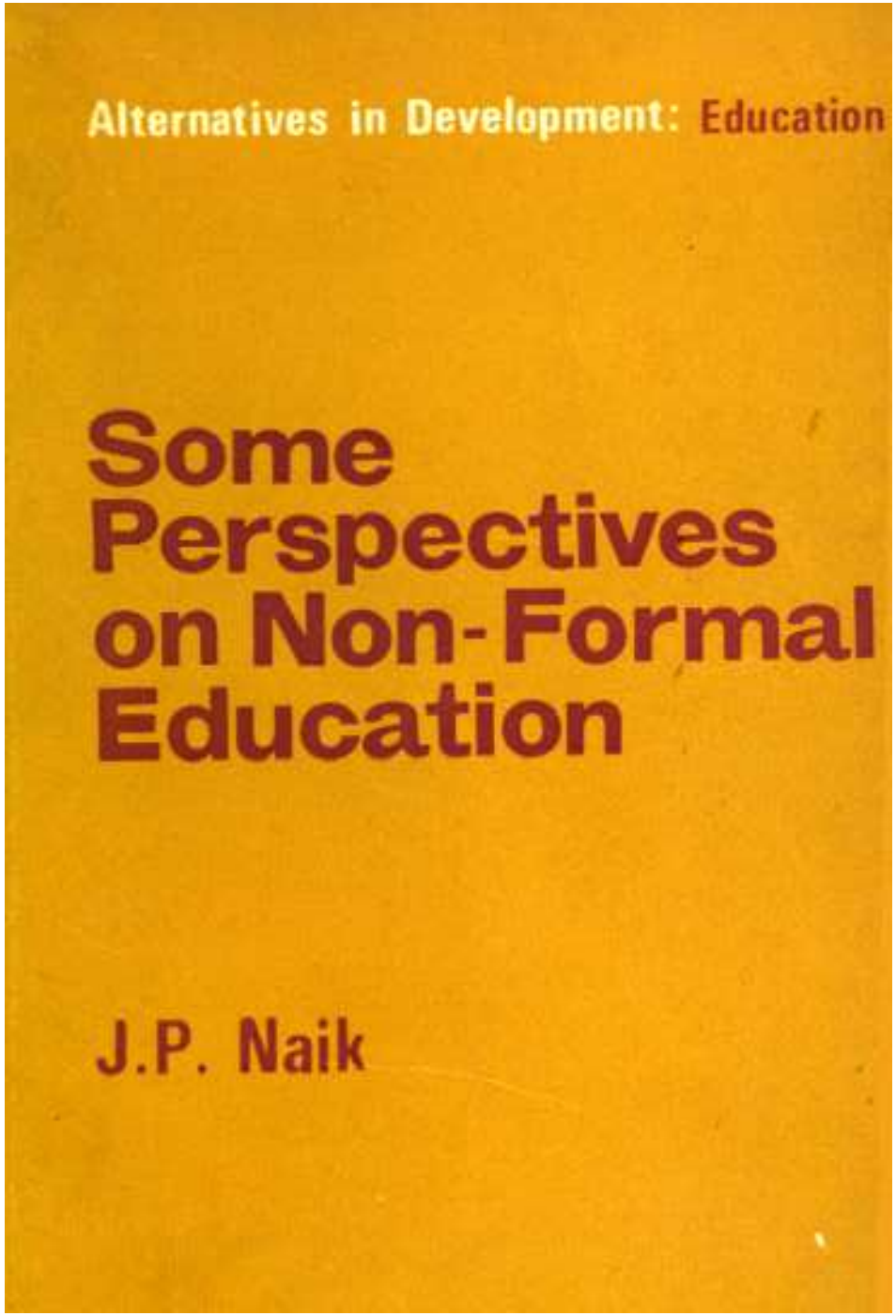
Alternatives in Development: Education
Some Perspectives on Non-Formal Education
J.P. Naik

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PREFACE

This book elaborates to some extent the ideas contained in the Zakir Husain Memorial Lecture, which I delivered at the Mysore Conference of the Indian Adult Education Association on 16 October 1976. It is written and is being published at the request of friends who believe that it would serve some useful purpose in the development of a programme of non-formal education in the country.

The book is the result of long discussions with Mr. Asher Deleon, Dr. Chitra Naik, and Shri Anil Bordia on different aspects of non-formal education. I take this opportunity to thank them for their valuable suggestions. Needless to say, the responsibility for the views expressed here is entirely mine.

I am grateful to Smt. S. Radhakrishnan for assistance in editing and publication. I also thank the Indian Adult Education Association, New Delhi, and the Academy of Political and Social Studies, Poona, for permission to use the addresses delivered under their auspices.

J.P. NAIK
Member-Secretary, ICSSR

New Delhi
30 June 1977

TO
DR. ZAKIR HUSAIN

CONTENTS

Preface iii

I Some Preliminary Issues 1

II Concept, Methods and Status 23

III Programmes, Organization and Implementation 48

Appendices

I Political Content of Education 77

II Non-Formal Education for the Pre-School Child 90

III The Functional Primary School 92

IV Non-Formal Education of the Out-of-School Youth 107

CHAPTER I

SOME PRELIMINARY ISSUES

The publication of this book hardly needs an apology. Non-formal education is the latest arrival on the Indian educational scene where new arrivals are by no means infrequent. As generally happens in the case of all 'new' arrivals, it is having a mixed reception and has already begun to mean many things to many groups and individuals. In a situation of this type, it would obviously be an advantage to set down, somewhat comprehensively, the different perspectives on the programmes of non-formal education in the Indian situation. This will help to clarify its basic assumptions, concepts, programmes, organization, potentials, and limitations.

In this chapter, it is proposed to discuss four issues of a preliminary character, viz., (1) What is non-formal education? (2) What is its historical background in India? (3) Why is there such a deep and world-wide interest in non-formal education at present? and (4) What is the best use to which we can put this recent revival of interest in non-formal education?

WHAT IS NON-FORMAL EDUCATION? A DEFINITION

A very common misconception is to equate learning (or education) with schooling. It is true that school is a social institution organized with the specific object of giving education or helping individuals to learn. It is also true that some important learning does take place in the school and that the school can promote some types of learning better than any other institution. It is not, however, true that all learning takes place in the school only or that no important learning takes place outside the school. In fact, for most people, the largest part, and some of the most important part of their education or learning takes place outside the school. It is, therefore, necessary to emphasize that the

school is not the only source or institution of learning which takes place through three channels: incidental, non-formal, and formal.

(1) *Incidental Education :* Incidental learning is what occurs automatically in the process of living, as a result of what an individual absorbs from the environment in which he lives or grows up. For instance, very early in his life a child learns the basic control and use of his body, his mother-tongue and the language (or even languages) of his locality, and the social etiquette that is expected of a child (with all its do's and dont's). He also acquires the basic elements of the traditional culture of his family or group. This incidental education continues as the child grows up. As a young man and as an adult, he learns and experiences several things such as the development of his identity, maturity and adulthood, love and sex, the ecstacies, agonies and responsibilities of marriage and parenthood, or duties and responsibilities of a citizen. He continues to learn from the members of his family and incidents in his family life, from his social group, from his peers, from his involvement with the work that earns his livelihood and his colleagues therein, from illnesses of his own or of relations and friends, from his travels and so on. Incidental learning is thus as old as humanity itself and both *universal* and *life-long* : and it also enables an individual to acquire all that any education is expected to give, viz., (1) information, knowledge, and wisdom, (2) skills of a kind, some of which do not even admit of instruction (formal or non-formal), and (3) values. It is generally more effective in the inculcation of values. It is also obvious that the type, level, and quality of incidental education depends essentially upon the environment in which one grows up and from which it is absorbed. For instance, the incidental education which is imbibed by a child of a primitive tribe growing up in the forests of Orissa is obviously different from that of a child of a senior government official growing up in New Delhi.

(2) *Non-Formal Education :* Incidental education, which was the only education that an individual received in the primitive societies that existed at the dawn of civilization, ceased to be adequate as knowledge began to accumulate, and specialization became essential for the maintenance and growth of societies. This led to the development of various categories of non-formal

education, which were deliberately organized by the society and which functioned on their own or supplemented incidental education. For instance, when the roles of men and women got separated and stereotyped, men learnt their skills as bread-earners (whether as craftsmen, farmers, hunters, or fighters) by being apprenticed to their fathers, elder brothers, or other selected men, and women learnt their skills of home-making and child-rearing by apprenticeship to their mothers, elder sisters, or other women. When warfare became a specialized art, new social institutions were developed to train the young to fight. Religion and culture were carried to the people, not only through incidental education, but also through special programmes of non-formal education built round temples, mosques, and churches and even through secular institutions like folk drama, dance, and music. In this, unwritten literature like proverbs, tales, or songs that passed from mouth to mouth also played a role. As societies grew more complex and modernized, they did develop formal systems of education. But it is necessary to remember that these agencies of non-formal education did not disappear, merely because formal education appeared on the scene. On the other hand, they continued to grow and new programmes or institutions of non-formal education were created and developed to suit the changing situation (e.g., libraries, museums, press, radio, and television). At the present time, therefore, non-formal channels of education cover both liberal and vocational education; they are traditional as well as modern; and they have continued to play an important role in the education and socialization of individuals, both before and after the birth of formal education. Like incidental education, non-formal education covers all the three educational objectives of imparting knowledge, teaching skills, or promoting values, although in the traditional forms it was most commonly used for the teaching of skills. It is also as universal as incidental education and no individual can escape *some* exposure to *some* form of non-formal education at one stage or another of his life.

(3) *Formal Education :* The school as an institution (and hence formal education as a channel of education) was born at that stage in social development when division of labour became pronounced and the need to create special institutions and special

functionaries for several categories of social activities began to be felt. For instance, when knowledge or skills developed to such an extent that their preservation, promotion, and diffusion could not be managed through incidental or non-formal channels, it was found necessary to create special groups as teachers and the formal school as an institution to perform these functions. The process began in most societies with the development and accumulation of sacred religious literature which made it necessary to establish formal schools and to train up a group of individuals in every generation whose duty was to preserve and disseminate this knowledge and also to add to it to the extent possible or desirable. Thus arose the priestly class and the formal school system where young persons could be trained to join and sustain the class and to continue to preserve, promote, and disseminate the sacred religious heritage of the people. The idea was later extended to other specialized tasks like the practice of law and medicine, or battle-craft. The concept of formal education and of the school as a social institution to support it was thus the last to be developed in human societies. In the initial stages, its extent was very limited and it was supported more by the voluntary efforts of the communities than by the State. In the modern industrial societies, however, it grew rapidly and enormously due to several reasons. Firstly, industrialization shifted productive work from the family to the factory and made children superfluous for work. It also took the parents away from the family for their work so that they could not look after their children for a long part of the day. This enforced idleness for children and the inability of parents to look after them made it necessary to create some institutions to look after the children and to keep them from mischief. Secondly, the industrial society demanded certain types of individuals with given knowledge, skills, and values and it was not possible to create such individuals through the existing social institutions or through incidental and non-formal channels only. The school thus became a significant and basic institution of the society. It was, therefore, no surprise that the State came forward to support the school in a big way. The school system thus grew in proportion as the industrial State grew in power and commanded increasing resources. Thirdly, the system had an in-built device for growth because some

education created a demand for more education, because a fair proportion of the products of the school got employment within the system itself as teachers and needed more students to justify their existence, and because the close relationship between the school system and remunerative employment made formal education increasingly indispensable for more and more individuals and families. As a result of all these factors, the school system has now achieved an immense significance, status, and size in most societies. It is often described as the largest industry which involves about one-fifth to one-fourth of the total population, employs about one to two per cent of the labour force, and consumes three to six per cent of the national income. In spite of this, it is equally obvious that formal education is not necessarily universal, unless the society concerned has made and implemented a deliberate decision to provide compulsory education for a specific age-group. It always covers only a part of an individual's life, the length of such coverage depending more upon the social, economic, cultural, and political status of the individual than on his talents; and it cannot and should not cover the entire life-span of an individual. This is its main difference from incidental and non-formal education. On the other hand, like both these channels, formal education also is a threefold process: it imparts information, teaches skills, and helps the cultivation of values. But it is obviously at its best in conserving, increasing, and diffusing knowledge.

In India, as in other countries, all these three channels of incidental, non-formal, and formal education have coexisted for centuries. The formal system of modern education is comparatively recent, and even today it reaches out only to the minority of well-to-do individuals. But the vast majority of the people who miss the school system still continue to receive incidental and traditional non-formal education. This endows many of them with good character and makes them wise and cultured. As the modern educational system emphasizes imparting of information which does not often lead either to knowledge or to wisdom, and as it does not necessarily build worthwhile skills and values, there is no essential relationship between formal education and wisdom, culture or skills; a person may have received formal education and be without wisdom, skills or character while many 'uneducated' and illiterate individuals

could show wisdom, skills, culture and character of which one could rightly feel proud.

Against the background of this wider concept of learning, it is possible to offer a working definition of non-formal education and to distinguish it from incidental education on the one hand and formal education on the other.

- –Formal education means the education imparted in the formal system of education. It is necessarily organized and the vast bulk of formal education either receives State support or is organized by the State itself.
- –Incidental education means all that one learns as a concomitant of growing up in a society. Incidental education is, therefore, entirely dependent on the home and the society which are educational institutions in themselves and is *not* specifically organized like formal education.
- –Non-formal education is to be distinguished from formal education on the one hand and incidental education on the other. It differs from formal education in the sense that it takes place *outside* the formal school system (although this characteristic is shared by incidental education as well). It also differs from incidental education in that it is *organized* (which incidental education is not).

One is not happy with the word 'non-formal', partly because it is a negative phrase (all negative definitions are unsatisfactory), and partly because it would even cover incidental education (which also is not formal). But the wisdom of the English language has decided to use the simplified expression non-formal education for a more precise but awkward expression : 'non-formal and non-incidental education'. The usage is accepted here for the convenience it provides, and especially because there appears to be no better alternative to suggest.

Definitions are a tricky affair; and one is often compelled to modify them even as they are being formulated. For instance, it must be pointed out that these three categories are not totally exclusive of each other. There could be channels of non-formal education within the formal system itself (e.g., correspondence education or extra-mural activities of universities). Sometimes, the formal system utilizes the channels of non-formal education

to fortify or supplement its own programmes (e.g., use of radio or TV for school education). Moreover, every school is a community of a kind and a good deal of incidental education always goes on within the school itself. Not infrequently, the school itself becomes a formal community (e.g., a university campus where teachers and students live together) and the incidental and non-formal education which such a community provides become even more important and effective than what happens in its class-rooms. Similarly, the line between non-formal education (which is organized but outside the formal school) and incidental education (which is also outside the formal school but unorganized) is not always easy to draw. For instance, the way in which a girl learns home-craft and child-rearing or a son learns the craft of his father, or a young man learns music by becoming the student of a reputed singer, has characteristics of both incidental and non-formal education. But such overlap apart, it is usually no problem to distinguish between formal, non-formal, and incidental education and to deal with them as distinct entities.

Before concluding this definitional discussion, two issues need to be clarified. The total educational process which a society needs must include *all* the three channels of education – formal, non-formal, and incidental; and Education of a society is the total integrated effect of all the three channels, each of which has its own distinctive role to play. Secondly, *every* individual also receives his education in all the three channels (except in those unfortunate situations where he escapes the formal school); and although the relative quantum and significance of each of these channels in one's life may vary from individual to individual, it is advantageous for every individual to expose himself to all the three channels for a complete education. In a situation of this type, it is wrong to indulge in the amateurish exercise of denigrating one channel or exalting another. Each channel has its own strengths and weaknesses and its own potential and limitations; and what one should be most concerned with is to make the best use of every channel, socially as well as individually.

A BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

It was observed earlier that non-formal education is the latest arrival on the Indian educational scene. This only means that

Indian educationists have started talking of non-formal education very recently and it does not mean that non-formal education is new to India. In fact, both non-formal and incidental education are extremely old and, if anything, it is formal education that arrived last on the educational scene in India as in every other country. To set the perspective right, therefore, it is essential to take a bird's eye-view of their origins and development.

In the very simple primitive tribal societies that we had in India in the remote past, incidental education was the only known or available channel. Children and youth learnt by living and participating in the activities of the home and society. It was not education *for* living but education *through* living; and there was no difference between the process of socialization and education.

Gradually, as the quantum of available knowledge began to increase and the need for specialized skills began to grow, some persons began to specialize in certain skills (e.g., men, specialized in fighting, fishing, hunting, or medicine and women specialized in cooking, agriculture, child-care, and mid-wifery). This led to forms of education which stand mid-way between incidental and non-formal education, e.g., individual children or young persons learning essential skills through apprenticeship to a member of the family or some other suitable person outside it. Later on some regular forms of non-formal education also came to be organized, e.g., a *Ghotul* for young persons among the Muria Gond. These were not formal schools but they did perform certain specific educational functions which neither the home nor the society did. At this stage of development, therefore, the formal school had not yet been born; and education merely consisted of these incidental, semi-non-formal or early non-formal channels.[1]

Even in the ancient period, the society in India grew in size, became more complex, developed a fairly high degree of specialization, and gathered a considerable amount of knowledge the

[1]In fact, in many tribal communities of India, where a school has not yet been established, these are still the only forms of education available; and even where the modern school has been opened, so few tribal children avail themselves of it, that it would be a truism to say that the bulk of the tribal people are educated, even today, through incidental, semi-formal, or early non-formal channels. The same would also be true of quite a proportion of children in rural areas who never enter schools.

rate of growth of which was also accelerated to some extent. There was thus a need for creating selected special groups as well as institutions for undertaking the responsibility to preserve, increase, and disseminate the accumulated knowledge of the people. The literary castes thus came into existence and the formal school was born and grew slowly to a respectable size. Ancient India was in fact known for its universities which attracted students from all over the world as then known. The same trend continued in the middle ages as well; and when the Muslims came, their own system of formal education was added to the earlier Hindu system. By the end of the eighteenth century, a formal system of education, mostly supported by the community, had come into existence in all parts of the country. Side by side, some changes had taken place in incidental and non-formal systems of education as well. The quality of incidental education necessarily depends upon the quality of life in the society; and as society changed and grew to higher levels, incidental education also underwent a corresponding change. The institutions of non-formal education also grew in variety and sophistication over the years. Two of these changes deserve special notice. As the religion-based formal system of higher learning was ascriptive and severely limited in access, the need to spread the message of religion among the masses was keenly felt. This led to the creation of the great oral tradition in India which spread to all the nooks and corners of the country and which, in a mutilated form, survives even to this day. The second was the rise of *Akhadas* or institutions of physical education and military training which trained young men, irrespective of caste, to a career in the army.

Some aspects of the educational situation at the end of the eighteenth century deserve special notice. The access to the formal system of education was ascriptive, mostly based on birth, and restricted to the literary and priestly castes or classes, well-to-do landlords, money-lenders, and traders. The formal schools of higher learning had very limited access and imparted a religion-based education. They conferred no economic or political rewards worth the name; but their students and teachers were highly respected in society. The formal elementary schools were utilitarian, taught the three R's and, wherever necessary, the court language, and qualified some of their students for

jobs under government or outside where such skills were in demand. Women hardly went to schools, and even among men the percentage of literacy was only about six. In short, the formal education system was mostly availed of by the well-to-do or prestigeous classes while the vast bulk of the people remained poor and powerless and were educated mostly through non-formal or incidental channels. It must be pointed out, however, that this difference did not place the masses of people at any great disadvantage in comparison with the classes who received formal education.[2] For one thing, the social, economic, and political rewards which the formal system offered were not large and the differences in life-styles of the educated and the uneducated were not very conspicuous. What is even more important, vertical mobility lay not through the ascriptive channels of formal education, but through the more democratic non-formal channels of military training and a career in the army.

This situation has undergone an unbelievable change during the past 175 years. For instance, a modern system of formal education has been created and has grown to tremendous dimensions. It now has about 700,000 institutions of various types, about 100 million students, a teaching force of more than three million, and a total expenditure of about Rs.25,000 million. The formal system of elementary education is not very different from that of the eighteenth century. But modern secondary and higher education is totally different from the old indigenous schools of higher learning and has enabled us to contribute to as well as to share all the growing knowledge in the world. It has modernized our elite groups that avail themselves of this education and made them citizens of an international community. It has also enabled us to create a large force of highly trained scientific and technological manpower which now ranks third in the world in size and which, apart from helping to modernize our economy and administration, is also helping several other developing countries to modernize themselves. The system has been given a monopoly to certify intellectual achievements and it has become a ladder which helps the ambitious to climb to privilege because it is only through successful

[2]Their handicaps arose mainly out of social institutions like caste or untouchability or economic factors like unequal distribution of wealth or property.

performance within it that one can rise to important positions in any walk of life. As its portals have been thrown open to all individuals irrespective of caste, sex, or religion, it has also become the most significant channel of vertical mobility. It may also be stated that, during this period, several new channels of non-formal education have also been developed. For instance, a modern press has been built up in the country, both in English and in the Indian languages. Libraries and museums have been established and are progressively being developed. The radio has now reached every village, the film has become a gigantic industry, and a network of TV is being gradually spread. The programmes of agricultural extension and of family planning are examples of modern non-formal channels developed for the masses.

All this is good and commendable no doubt. But the system has several weaknesses as well, both quantitative and qualitative. Among its qualitative weaknesses, mention may be made of its divorce from work and development so that it has no strong relationship either with productivity or with national needs and aspirations. It over-emphasizes imparting of information and rote memorization. It is weak in building up skills and weakest of all in the cultivation of values. As the Education Commission pointed out, its standards are far from satisfactory. It also makes little contribution to the personal growth of most individuals who enter the school system and even less to social transformation. On the quantitative side, the main weakness of the system is that its benefits reach only a minority of the population. Secondary and higher education, which alone enable a person to avail himself of the economic and political rewards which the system provides, are being availed of by only 10 per cent of the age-group 15-25; and of these, as many as eight come from the upper 20 per cent of the population and only as few as two come from the lower 80 per cent of the population. The very fact that 60 per cent of the population above the age of 10 is still illiterate shows that even the meagre benefits of primary education are available only to a minority. The same is true of the modern channels of non-formal education as well. Press and the library system have no meaning for the illiterate masses. The educational content of the radio is very limited and that of films is even less, if not actually negative. The TV is available

only to the metropolitan elite. Even agricultural extension mostly benefits the rich farmers.

It is, therefore, no surprise that, even at present, the vast masses of people are still educated through the traditional forms of non-formal and incidental education. It is indeed an eye-opener to find how little has been the impact of the formal system of education on the life of the masses, especially in the rural areas. A survey I conducted from this point of view in a small group of villages showed that the working members of the society had learnt most of the useful skills they had acquired through non-formal and incidental education. For instance, all women had learnt home-making and child-care outside the school system; all agriculturists had learnt their profession by actual participation, and the same was true of all artisans such as barbers, tailors, washermen, *dais*, tanners, carpenters, blacksmiths, or bricklayers. In fact, the only educated people in this community were the government servants and a few well-to-do 'leaders' who exploited the people. The results of this sad situation are obvious. The masses have remained poor, traditional, and feudal mainly because they are still being educated through the outdated incidental and non-formal educational channels of the eighteenth century which gives them their value systems, their supersititious beliefs, their limited and often obsolete knowledge, and their traditional limited skills. This is why our society, as a whole, is changing so slowly, in spite of the fairly rapid modernization of the elite groups. A large chasm has thus developed between the well-to-do, modernized elite groups which are the almost exclusive beneficiaries of the modern system of formal education (as well as of the modern channels of non-formal education) and the poor and traditional masses who are still receiving their education through the old traditional forms of non-formal and incidental education. This chasm is far wider today than that which separated the educated elite from the uneducated masses at the end of the eighteenth century. In the first place, the economic, political, and social rewards of the modern educational system are far greater than those of the formal educational system of the eighteenth century; and secondly, the introduction of modern science and technology has created a tremendous difference between the life-styles of the well-to-do educated individuals and those of the poor, uneducated masses.

A comprehensive and detailed history on the subject is yet to be written. What has been written so far under the title of the 'history of education in India' is really a history of the origin and growth of formal education only. It is not the intention here to write such a comprehensive history. But even the brief historical review given here would throw light on some aspects of non-formal education which generally go unnoticed. In particular, it highlights two main issues:

(1) Ours has been, since times immemorial, a hierarchical and inegalitarian society. This character has remained basically unaltered in spite of all the educational systems we have had: ancient, mediaeval, or modern. In the modern period in particular, some of its weaknesses (such as an exclusive ascriptive character) have been softened down. But on the other hand, some of the old disparities and inequalities have been magnified. Our attempts to reform the total educational system in the years ahead must, therefore, break new ground: they should help in bringing about a socio-economic transformation that would lead to the creation of a more egalitarian society visualized in the preamble to the Constitution.

(2) In the past 175 years, we have concentrated, almost exclusively, on the development of the formal system of education. Our attempts in the future have to be advanced on all the three fronts : (1) to transform, expand, and improve the formal school system; (2) to modernize the traditional forms of non-formal education and to supplement them with new forms that have become both available and essential; and (3) to improve the level and quality of incidental education for all.

RECENT INTEREST IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Although non-formal education is thus very old, not only in India, but in almost every country in the world, the awakening of a deep and world-wide interest in non-formal education is comparatively recent and only about 10 to 15 years old. Obviously, this raises two important questions : (1) What are the reasons for the development of the recent interest in non-formal education in all countries of the world, both developing and developed?; and (2) What do they imply for the future

development of non-formal education in the world and particularly in India?

The basic reply to the first question lies in the disenchantment with the formal education system which has grown to an immense size in the wake of the modern industrial civilization. At the end of the Second World War, the developed nations had evolved a large-scale system of formal education which provided universal elementary education for all children and good quality secondary and higher education for a fair proportion of their youth. They were also convinced that a future expansion of this system was fully justified and that it was a 'good' investment. They, therefore, increased their educational expenditures substantially (at about twice the rate of the growth in the national income). Most of them were able to provide universal secondary education, to increase the provision of higher education substantially, to provide liberally for adult education, and to improve standards. The developing countries were of the view that the wealth, prosperity, and power of the industrialized countries was due mainly to their formal education systems (rather than the other way round) and that they had only to introduce similar formal education systems in their own countries to become industrialized, rich, and powerful. They, therefore, vied with each other in building up their formal educational systems as a measure of the highest priority and this enterprise received every encouragement from the developed nations and international organizations like Unesco through a show of appreciation, financial aid, and provision of technical guidance. The twenty-year period (1945-1965) which witnessed an almost child-like faith in the efficacy of the formal education system, and led to its tremendous expansion in all countries of the world, may be described as the golden age of the formal school.

But then a disillusionment set in and the formal education system began to be vigorously attacked from several points of view. For instance, social scientists, who were sceptical of the tall claims made for the formal school, were not slow in pointing out that, even at its best, a formal school system of education with its single-point entry (in class I at about the age of 6), its sequential promotions from class to class every year, its exclusively full-time courses, and its professionalized body of teachers has several limitations. It can cover only the non-working

population which is the smaller and less effective section of the total population. It offers no help or a second chance to those unfortunate children who miss its narrow doors of admission or who are compelled to step off it for social and economic reasons. It contributes only a small proportion of the total education which an individual receives (the bulk of this comes from the home, the society at large, and the personal and working life of the individual himself). It has also a tendency to become a vested interest which helps to perpetuate privilege or to encourage conformity rather than to promote equality or healthy dissent. At the same time, its costs continue to mount till a point is reached when even the most affluent nations begin to feel that they are beyond their reach.

Most of these weighty arguments were applicable to both developed and developing countries. But it is important to note that the attack on the formal school was made, on quite different sets of grounds, in the developed and the developing nations. In the former, a powerful attack came from educationists who were convinced that the tremendous challenges of a very rapidly changing society can only be met through the development of the concept of life-long education for all, and who felt that the formal school, by itself, would never be able to meet this demand, unless an imaginative and large-scale programme of non-formal education was evolved, either within the system or as a large parallel stream. Another attack came from a different group of educationists who felt that the central emphasis must now change from 'education' or 'teaching' to 'learning', that this shift had become possible by the development of new technologies which promoted part-time education and self-study through programmes of non-formal education, and that, under these circumstances, a continuance of the old, almost exclusive emphasis on the full-time formal school, was academically undesirable and wasteful of time, energy, and funds. These attacks which made a deep impression on the public and the educational circles could not be ignored and, consequently, several alternative proposals of educational reform, and especially the large-scale development of non-formal education, came to be widely discussed and accepted.

In the developing countries, on the other hand, the disenchantment with the formal school system came from entirely

different considerations. These countries found that they were generally not in a position to create a formal education system in their societies which could compare favourably, both in quality and in quantity, with that in the developed countries, mainly because of the paucity of financial resources. In spite of immense investment which often distorted developmental priorities, the formal school in these countries remained comparatively weak in quality and mostly benefited the well-to-do while large segments of their population, especially the underprivileged groups, remained on the fringe of (or outside) the formal system. They also discovered that the formal school was slow in delivering the goods and that it had hardly any answers to immediate problems like mass mobilization of people for developmental programmes or training a new leadership, efficiently and quickly, from amongst those who did not or could not receive formal education. They further found that their attempt to imitate the Western model led to such inconvenient problems as educated unemployment without helping them materially to realize their dream of development or industrialization, wealth, and power. There was, therefore, a general desire to get away from the old exclusive emphasis on the formal school and to de.elop some alternative model or models which would be less costly, more intimately related to development, capable of yielding quick results, and taking education to all the people, and especially to the poor and under-privileged sections. Quite obviously, non-formal education appeared prominently in all these discussions as a viable alternative and began to receive considerable attention.

This disenchantment with the formal school system (or at least with the exclusive emphasis thereon) and the concern for the development of non-formal channels of education (although the expression 'non-formal' education had not then become so current or popular) began to be expressed in several country reports on educational reconstruction which came out during this period. Of special significance to us are the proposals made by the Education Commission which anticipated the present thinking to a considerable extent. For instance, it emphasized the concept of multiple-entry and part-time education for children in the age-group 6-14 to make elementary education universal (paras 7.28 to 7.32 of its Report). It also recommended that

there should be liberal provision for part-time education and self-study at the secondary and university stages, that all Board and University examinations should be thrown open to private candidates, and that correspondence courses should be organized on a large scale to meet the needs of all young persons who would want to continue with their secondary and higher education but could not do so on a full-time basis. It also emphasized the need for liquidating mass illiteracy in a phased, short-term programme and to provide adequately for Adult and Continuing Education (Chapter XVI). Finally, it drew attention to the need for moving ultimately in the direction of creating a learning society and providing life-long education for all, and pointed out that this would involve (1) the abandonment of the almost exclusive reliance which is now placed on full-time instruction in the formal school system and (2) the development, on a very large scale, of the alternative channels of part-time education and self-study which should have an equality of status with the formal channel. It said:

> 2.53 It has to be remembered that reliance on full-time education as the sole channel of instruction often divides the life of an individual into three water-tight and sharply divided stage: a pre-school stage of neither formal education nor work, a school stage of full-time education and no work, and a post-school stage of full-time work and no education. In a modernizing and rapidly changing society, education should be regarded, not as a terminal, but as a life-long process. It should begin informally in the home itself, and thereafter, it should be the ultimate objective of national policy to strive to bring every individual under the influence of the formal system of education as early as possible, and to keep him under it, directly or indirectly, throughout his life. Similarly, there should be no water-tight separation between work and education at any stage of a man's life, but only a relative shift of emphasis. An individual under full-time education should have some work-experience as an integral part of his education itself; and every full-time worker should have the inclination, leisure and means of continuing his education still further. In the same way, the transition from one stage to another should not be abrupt. For example, the transfer

of an individual from the infant's play-dominated world to formal school should include a transitional phase of gentle preparation and orientation to schooling. A young person should not be compelled to pass abruptly from a stage of full-time education to another of full-time work: it would be desirable to interpose a period of part-time education and part-time work between the two.

2.54 If these objectives are to be attained, it is necessary to abandon the present policy of placing an almost exclusive reliance on full-time education, and the two alternative channels of part-time and own-time education should be developed on a larger scale at every stage and in every sector of education and should be given the same status as full-time education. Secondly, adult and continuing education, which is almost totally neglected at present, should be emphasized to a very great extent. Taken together, these two reforms would

- enable those who have not completed a stage of education to complete it and, if they wish, to proceed to the next;
- help every educated person to have further education with or without formally enrolling himself in an educational institution;
- enable a worker to acquire knowledge, ability and vocational skill in order to be a better worker and to improve his chances of earning more; and
- help to refresh the knowledge of the educated person and enable him to keep pace with the new knowledge in the field of his interest.

Programmes of this type, which are being developed even in educationally advanced and affluent countries, cannot be ignored in an under-developed and poor country like India. They will smoothen the transition from school to life, reduce the cost of education to the State, and bring under the influence of the educational system a large number of persons who desire to educate themselves but cannot do so on academic grounds.

But it was not such isolated references to non-formal education in country reports that brought the idea in the focus of world thought in education. That signal service was done by the Report

of the *International Education Commission* set up by Unesco which was published in 1972 under the title: *Learning To Be.* It was this Report that highlighted, for the first time, the failures of the formal education system and the need for the development of non-formal education programmes. This Report has since been discussed internationally and nationally and has become an integral part of the international and national thinking on education. In fact, it may be said that, with this Report, non-formal education has come to stay.

It must also be pointed out that the significance of non-formal education was highlighted in another search, viz., the search for an alternative route to development or for an alternative model for the industrial society. When general policy-makers and development analysts began to study the relationship between education and development, they found that the formal education system made only a limited contribution to development and that the potential of non-formal education to contribute effectively and quickly to development was much greater. This is especially so in developing countries where one has to tackle staggering problems of population, food, health, unemployment, and poverty. In fact, the 'discovery' of non-formal education is more due to development planners than to educators as such.

The same conclusion has also been reached by social reformers on a grand scale who believe that the industrial society must be replaced by an alternative model which will be more conducive to human welfare. These include thinkers like Mahatma Gandhi and Ivan Illich who found that the creation of this new society would inevitably imply a total abolition of the formal school or its radical transformation and a far greater emphasis on programmes of non-formal education than what had been laid in the past.

Whether we look at the problem from the angle of educational reform or of social change (one cannot be tried without the other), it is thus becoming increasingly apparent in recent years that non-formal education will have to receive much greater attention and will have to be promoted on a priority basis. In fact, it may be said that educational thinking is now crystallizing round the following five points:

(1) The educational needs of a society (or an individual) cannot be met by the formal education system alone. What

every society (or individual) needs, therefore, is a comprehensive and properly blended programme consisting of incidental, formal, and non-formal education.

(2) Non-formal education is needed by *all* countries, whether developed or developing. In the developed countries, the need for non-formal education is supported on the ground that it helps to create a learning society, to provide life-long education for all, to utilize fully the new educational technologies that have now become available, and to improve the quality of education by shifting the emphasis from education (or teaching) to learning. In the developing countries, on the other hand, the immediate objectives for promoting non-formal education are somewhat different, namely, to reduce the costs and improve the efficacy of the system of formal education, to make education available to those social groups (especially the under-privileged and poor people) who are now outside the educational system, and to relate education more effectively to development, especially in its immediate and short-term aspects. In the long run, these countries are also interested in creating a learning society and providing life-long education to all in which programmes of non-formal education would have a still larger role in their midst.

(3) Non-formal education is also needed by *all* social groups and individuals. The well-to-do ruling classes generally get good incidental education and also have good access to the formal system. But they still need non-formal education to improve the quality of their life or to increase their individual efficiency. The poor and the oppressed do not generally have good incidental education and are not in a position to take adequate advantage of the formal system. Their need for non-formal education is even greater. It can spearhead their efforts to liberate themselves and to improve their standard of living.

(4) Educational reform has to be intimately related to social reconstruction which is needed by all countries of the world. If man is to survive, we will have to abandon the uncontrolled pursuit of consumerism on which the present industrialized society is built and which leads to infinite waste, depletion of scarce and non-renewable resources, and pollution. We have, therefore, to evolve an alternative society free from these evils. In the developed nations, it may mean a move in the direction

of a simpler life, fewer physical needs, and still greater efforts for educational and cultural growth. In the developing countries, it may mean the provision of a decent standard of living for all and an equally great emphasis on educational and cultural growth. Obviously, these attempts at social reconstruction will necessarily imply a radical transformation of all education – incidental, formal, and non-formal.

(5) It is neither possible nor desirable to think of non-formal education in isolation. The concept arose in our search for a radical reform of education and society; and it has to be developed as an integral part of a major movement of educational and social reform.

OUR APPROACH

It is this last statement which is extremely significant in the context of Indian society and education. We have to make a supreme effort to create an egalitarian society which will assure a decent standard of living to all and in which the evils of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, ignorance, and ill-health will have been abolished. This will necessarily imply a simultaneous effort to reconstruct our total educational system. In the past, such an effort has only meant the expansion and improvement of the formal system of education. In the future, it should mean something broader and more significant, viz., an effort to improve all the three channels of incidental, formal, and non-formal education in an integrated and coordinated fashion. In this effort, an immense emphasis would have to be laid on the development of non-formal education. It is , therefore, obvious that the recent interest in non-formal education can and should be used to bring about a radical transformation of Indian education and society.

So great a task can be achieved only if we take non-formal education seriously and do not toy with it as we have often done with several significant educational programmes in the past. Let us not forget that this is not the first time we are discussing a new educational concept or programme. In fact, the history of Indian education is littered with the corpses of ideas we wooed for a time and then threw out, especially in the field of mass education which has always languished. For instance, we have not worked out the scheme of basic education which Mahatma

Gandhi put forward, either in its original form or in the modified form recommended by the Education Commission. Similarly, the concept of universal elementary education has been before us for nearly a hundred years. It was put forward, for the first time, by Dadabhai Naoroji as early as 1881 when he suggested a programme of universal primary education of four years' duration for all children. We accepted it. We then found it to be too plebeian and decided to provide good education to all children till they reached the age of 14 years. Even this is found to be unsatisfactory and some of us are already talking of amending the Constitution to provide universal education till the age of 16 or even 18. But while our objectives are soaring high on paper, we will not have provided even four years' education to all children by 1981 when the Centenary of Dadabhai Naoroji's demand may have to be celebrated.

The same may be said of the universal education of adults, action on which was also started about forty years ago. In the thirties of this century, people were not ashamed to call it literacy and to talk of liquidation of the illiteracy of the masses. But we soon began to think that mere literacy was not enough, and decided to develop programmes of adult education. Having soon discovered that adult education cannot be divorced from the attempt to bring about social change, we rechristened it as social education; and to familiarize the people with the new terminology, used the expression 'Social (Adult) Education' as a transitional measure. For a time, we also toyed with the concepts of 'functional literacy' and 'fundamental education'. We have now forgotten all this and have suddenly discovered non-formal education; and as a transitional measure, we have already set up a Directorate of Non-Formal (Adult) Education. While I do not doubt the conceptual progress involved in all this transition from 'literacy' to 'non-formal education', I cannot help pointing out that very little has happened on the ground during all these years, that 60 per cent of our people are still illiterate, and that their absolute numbers are still increasing.

I would, therefore, strongly urge, with all the emphasis at my command, that we should deal with programmes of non-formal education in earnest and not in the cavalier fashion with which we have treated several other programmes of equal (or even greater) significance in the past.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPT, METHODS AND STATUS

In the preceding chapter, a view was put forward that, instead of tinkering with the programmes of non-formal education, we should use the recent interest in non-formal education to develop a programme of total reform in education and society. If this approach is to be pursued further, we will have to move in the direction of creating a learning society, and providing facilities for life-long learning for all, through the creation of a comprehensive educational system which will integrate all the three channels of formal, non-formal, and incidental education so that every individual shall have adequate opportunities, throughout his life,

- to learn what he likes, at his own preferred pace, and from whomsoever he likes, and
- to teach what he knows to those who desire to learn it from him.

This and the following chapter are, therefore, devoted to a detailed discussion of this programme and its implications for the development of non-formal education.

FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Non-formal education was defined earlier as organized education *outside* the formal system. This is a fairly good definition to begin with. But it gives no clue to the nature of non-formal education or of the precise relationship between formal and non-formal education. If the concept of non-formal education is to be translated into concrete and effective programmes, its essential features will have to be discussed in considerable detail.

To begin with, let us first compare and contrast formal and non-formal education.

(1) The formal school is intrinsically organized to teach something and it is round this specific purpose that everything else, viz., its staff, buildings, equipment, and students, gets organized. In a non-formal programme, the central point is *learning :* either by oneself or *learning together* by a group of interested individuals; and it is round this focus that everything else, viz., staff, buildings, equipment, curriculum, etc., gets organized.

(2) The formal school is by and large a *full-time* institution and is meant essentially for *non-workers*, i.e., children and youth. It is, therefore, utilized more by the well-to-do classes who can afford to send their children to schools earlier and keep them there longer; and for the same reason, the children of the poor who are required to begin their working life early, become its drop-outs. Non-formal education programmes, on the other hand, are basically meant for those who want to learn while working and are therefore part-time (or of the sandwich type).

(3) The formal school is manned, by and large, by full-time and professional teachers. Non-formal programmes can be run by such teachers. But they are also run by a very large number of para-professional or non-professional teachers or by volunteers or by any one who is prepared to share his knowledge with others who desire it.

(4) The role of a teacher in a formal school is generally that of a superior individual and the general teacher-pupil relationship is of the dominant-subordinate, of the giver-receiver, of the active-passive type. In non-formal programmes, the teacher is engaged, as an equal, in the joint enterprise of learning along with his students and there is a continuous feed-back from the teacher to the students and *vice-versa*. Very often, the students learn from each other while the teacher merely acts as the facilitator.

(5) The programmes of formal education are necessarily organized through the school which is a specialized institution for imparting education. But programmes of non-formal education can be built round almost all

social, economic, and cultural institutions such as farms, factories, shops, libraries, museums, drama, and so on. In fact the capacity of non-formal programmes to use non-teachers and non-educational institutions enables it to tap the immense educational resources of the community which are not utilized by the formal school.

(6) The formal school, on the whole, tends to be dominated by concepts of uniformity and rigidity. On the other hand, programmes of non-formal education tend to be dominated by concepts of diversity, flexibility, and elasticity.

(7) The school can afford to have, and generally has, 'captive' audiences and also compels them to put in a specific attendance. On the other hand, attendance in non-formal activities is generally voluntary: people turn out and participate in a programme only if they find it relevant and interesting and worth their time and effort.

(8) In the formal school, the educands are mostly non-workers. It is, therefore, essential to introduce work-experience in schools which is a difficult problem. In non-formal education, most educands are workers. So what we have to do is to build education round work which is a comparatively simple affair.

(9) The formal education system generally tends to be centralized. On the other hand, the very nature of non-formal education programmes makes decentralization inevitable because the clientele must be brought into the process effectively to define their own needs, interests, and priorities.

(10) The costs of formal education programmes tend to be on the high side because of professionalized and full-time staff and other related policies while those in non-formal education tend to be lower because of the use of para-professionals and non-professionals and optimum use of all community resources.

The comparison can be easily extended to several other aspects. But that is hardly necessary. It is true that some programmes of formal education are so well organized as to exhibit

many characteristics of what is attributed here to non-formal education, while several programmes of non-formal education fail to exploit their true potential and tend to develop the characteristics attributed here to formal education. All the same, the distinction made above is generally true; and it may be said that, while formal education is a *system* with its own distinct structure, interlocking parts and internal coherence, non-formal education is a non-system or an *open-system:* it is simply a collective label covering a wide assortment of organized educational activities outside the formal system which serve the identified learning needs of a variety of groups – children, youth, adults, men, women, farmers, artisans, merchants, rich, poor, etc. – and which change as these needs change. We cannot, however, look upon non-formal education as a panacea for all educational ills. Let us not forget that, in non-formal education, we may gain in relevance but lose in systematization of knowledge, and that its flexibility and functionality may be offset by non-retention and superficiality. Programmes of non-formal education are also subject to the same social constraints that impinge upon formal education, although they have a somewhat greater potential to overcome or escape them. It is also equally obvious that it is far more challenging to plan and implement programmes of non-formal education than those of formal education.

It may also be pointed out that formal education, in its turn, has several advantages over non-formal education. For instance, formal education has an immense prestige because it has a monopoly to certify the attainments of individuals, because it alone trains for the prestigious professions (or for the prestigious positions in other professions) and because an accomplishment certified by it is closely linked to prestigious and well-paid jobs. Moreover, people tend to judge a person, not by what he is or knows or can do, but by the formal education which he has received: a B.A., for instance, is assumed to be better than an illiterate person in spite of the fact that the former may be a crook and a fool and the latter a good, wise man. Some programmes of non-formal education have a similar prestige (e.g., in-service education for doctors, civil servants, or business executives) because they are meant for prestigious people. But most programmes of non-formal education, whether liberal (e.g., literacy) or vocational (e.g., upgrading the skills of farmers),

do not have this prestige and do not serve prestigious people. Very often, their ostensible object is to convey formal education imparted in schools, with some loss in quality, to a clientele which is unable to attend schools because of poverty or unemployment. Consequently, an erroneous impression gets round that non-formal education is only another name for adult literacy and education or that it is only some second-rate education for second-rate people.

What has been said above is true of the existing situation in most countries, developed or developing, and variations are one of degree and not of kind. Everywhere, formal education is the more uniform, more rigid, more centralized, and more compulsive system while the non-formal programmes are varied, elastic, decentralized, and voluntary. In spite of these points which ought to favour non-formal education, the formal system is the more prestigious channel, consumes the vast bulk of resources available, and largely benefits the well-to-do. A varying proportion of non-formal education programmes are admitted into the formal system itself and acquire its status and prestige. But the vast bulk of them remain outside the formal system, lack prestige and status, have no links with the formal system, and are utilized mainly by the less privileged groups. The question, therefore, is whether we should accept this position as valid and live with it or whether we should try to change it and if so in what direction. The issues are obviously very important and by no means fully resolved. In fact, there are as many as four different schools of thought on this subject and they need some examination.

(1) *De-Schooling Society :* The first and probably the most radical of these proposals has been put forward by Ivan Illich. He is deeply committed to equality and to the dignity and autonomy of the individual and is greatly concerned with improvement in the quality of life. It is his view that these basic values have been adversely affected and the quality of life marred in the modern industrial society which pursues consumerism as a goal in itself and where the freedom of the individual is greatly restricted by oppressive institutions and organized bands of professional experts. He would, therefore, prefer to replace the modern industrial society by a convivial society

-where every individual has full autonomy and facilities for growth, restricted only by every other individual's equal right to similar autonomy and facilities;
-where consumerism ceases to be a goal and the need for a reckless and wasteful exploitation of resources disappears;
-where an individual's access to essential goods and services is based on equality and justice so that no one has a standard of living below a prescribed minimum or above a prescribed maximum;
-where an appropriate technology is adopted so that a new system of production by the masses replaces the present system of mass production;
-where organized professionalism is done away with and convivial rather than oppressive institutions function in a decentralized rather than a centralized set-up.

It is against such a vision of life and society that the proposals of Illich for de-schooling of society have to be interpreted and understood.

In so far as education is concerned, Illich places the highest emphasis on learning (or self-learning) rather than on education (or teaching). He is also strongly in favour of non-formal and incidental channels of education which, in his opinion, are adequate to meet all our needs. On the other hand, he finds that the formal school, with all its rigidities and direct and indirect compulsions, and with its vast army of professionalized full-time teachers, is an instrument of mis-education rather than of education and hinders rather than helps the spread of proper education among the people. He is also of the view that the weaknesses of the formal school are so great that it is beyond repair. He, therefore, recommends that the formal school should be totally abolished or that the society should be de-schooled,[1] and replaced by a large variety of facilities for learning through non-formal or incidental channels. According to Illich, this will not mean a return to the age of darkness, but a great step ahead to create an educated, cultured, and learning society where every one will continue to learn all throughout his life and also to share his knowledge with all others who may desire to do so.

[1]Ivan Illich, *De-schooling Society*, Penguin Books Ltd., Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1973.

Today the ideas of Illich are one of the most discussed educational alternatives in the world. But in spite of their provocative character and strength of arguments, they have convinced only a few who are experimenting with some alternatives to the formal school. Most people consider them utopian because, while Illich does an admirable job of demolishing the school, he is not at all convincing on the positive aspects of his proposals and the alternative structures of non-formal education he would like to create are not sufficiently clear. Many also believe that, while a formal school may not be a necessity in the ideal convivial society of which Illich speaks, de-schooling will create immense problems and may set the clock considerably back in the hierarchical and inegalitarian societies we have on our hands. The issue is far from resolved. But at this stage, it is more a matter of academic debate than of concrete action.

It is interesting to note the great similarities between the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi and Ivan Illich. Both are dissatisfied with the industrial society and seek an alternative which is very similar. In education, Mahatma Gandhi was of the view that the formal system should not be supported by the State and should maintain itself through the earnings of the teachers and students or through the voluntary contributions of the people. This idea comes nearest to 'de-schooling'. Although we have tried to implement the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi on mass education through the programme of basic education, we never accepted his concept of self-sufficiency which he described as its 'acid test'. Similarly, the institutions of national higher education which had refused to accept State aid under the British rule began to accept it after independence. This was no doubt inevitable, but it is contrary to the Gandhian concept of Education retaining its economic independence vis-a-vis the State.

(2) *Radical Transformation of the Formal School :* The great achievement of Illich is that he has made everyone actually conscious of the several weaknesses of the formal school which will never be the same again and whether one does or does not agree with his proposals for de-schooling, one thing is certain: every one is convinced that it is absolutely essential to carry out a radical reform of the formal school so that it emphasizes learning rather than teaching, becomes elastic, flexible, and diversified, develops programmes of part-time education and self-

study, and uses all community resources, including non-teachers. The second approach to the solution of the problem, therefore, is to secure a radical reform of the formal school. This is the most popular programme with educationists and the public in almost all countries of the world. It may be pointed out, however, that a radical reform of the formal school, though necessary, is not sufficient to achieve the goal we have in view. Everything is not right even with the existing programmes of non-formal and incidental education. Side by side with the reform of the formal school, therefore, steps are also needed to reform non-formal and incidental education and to integrate them with the formal stream.

(3) *The Additive Approach :* A third solution to the problem is what may be described as the additive approach. The official reaction to the strong criticism of the formal school and the equally strong case made out in support of non-formal education programmes is generally to take action on the following lines:

(a) to carry out some reforms in the formal school, mostly of a patch-work character, which do not make any significant impact on its weaknesses; and
(b) to initiate a few programmes of non-formal education in addition.

This additive approach under which a large unreformed formal school system continues to exist side by side with a parallel system of non-formal education which is generally treated as a poor relation is obviously no way to solve the basic educational problems. Yet, this is what is happening in most developing countries. In India, for instance, the development of non-formal programmes has been suggested as the *only* way to universalize elementary education. But instead of transforming the entire system of elementary education by a blend of the formal and non-formal elements so that every child is free to enter the elementary school at his own convenience at more than one point, learn at his own pace, and study either on a full-time or on a part-time basis to suit his own needs, we are continuing the existing wasteful and ineffective system of formal elementary education *intact* with all its drop-outs or push-outs, and merely adding a few classes of non-formal education for the non-attending

children. This is merely tinkering with the problem and not using the powerful tool of non-formal education as an instrument of total educational reform. The sooner we abandon such puerile attempts the better.

(4) *The Integrative Approach :* This leads me to the fourth and final proposal, viz., to develop an integrative approach to the reform of all the three channels of education. This proposal attempts simultaneous action on three fronts:

(a) A sustained and large-scale programme of radical reform in the formal school is developed. Speaking of the conditions in India, for instance, it may be said that the single-point entry must go. The school system should be elastic, flexible, and diversified. It should not be exclusively full-time and the alternative channels of part-time and own-time education should be fully developed. The almost exclusive dependence on full-time teachers must be given up and all teaching resources of the community must be utilized.
(b) The existing forms of non-formal education are studied and improved. New forms of non-formal education are also introduced where needed. In fact, the whole emphasis is shifted to a large-scale development of non-formal education (which replaces even many forms of formal education currently provided through the school so that it assumes at least an equal status with the programmes of formal education.
(c) There is a simultaneous effort to improve the quality of incidental education also.

What is even more important, these three programmes are developed, not as independent and parallel channels, but as well-coordinated, synthesized, and integrated parts of a single system of *Education for the Society*.

All things considered, our best alternative obviously is to evolve a new system of education which will incorporate within it all programmes of formal, non-formal, and incidental education, which will operate all the three channels of full-time, part-time, and own-time education and give them equality of status, which will make full use of all institutions (whether meant

primarily for education or otherwise) for purposes of learning, which will replace the present exclusive emphasis on full-time professional teachers by the use of all human resources so that every one becomes both a teacher and a student, and which will be sufficiently elastic, diversified, and flexible to provide all the necessary opportunities for learning to all individuals throughout their lives. This is probably best expressed in the following principles, considerata, and recommendations of the Report of the International Education Commission :

(1) Life-long education should be the master concept for educational policies in the years ahead, for both developed and developing countries.[2]
(2) Every individual must be in a position to keep learning throughout his life.[3]
(3) Education must be carried on at all ages of man, according to each individual's needs and convenience. He must, therefore, be oriented from the outset and from phase to phase, keeping the real purpose of all education in mind: personal learning, self-teaching, and self-training. Education must cease being confined in school-house walls. All kinds of existing institutions, whether designed for teaching or not, and many forms of social and economic activity, must be used for educational purposes.[4]
(4) Education should be dispensed with and acquired in a multiplicity of means (whether formal or informal, whether institutionalized or otherwise). The important thing is, not the path an individual has followed, but what he has learned or acquired.[5]
(5) Artificial and outmoded barriers between different educational disciplines, courses, and levels, and between formal and non-formal education should be abolished. Recurrent education should be gradually introduced.[6]
(6) An over-all open system helps learners to move within it, both horizontally and vertically and widens the range of choice available to them.[7]
(7) Each person should be able to choose his path more freely, in a more flexible framework, without being compelled to give up using educational facilities for life if he leaves the system.[8]

[2] *Learning To Be*, p. 182.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 181.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 183.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 184.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 189.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND WORK

The role of non-formal education vis-a-vis formal education needs to be examined in two other contexts, viz., work and development, to clarify its concepts, tasks, methods, and programmes.

The traditional formal school was based on wrong concepts of work as well as of liberal education. It believed that intellectual work was superior to manual work and that liberal education was opposed to work in the sense that those who received liberal education should not work with their hands or those who worked with their hands should receive no liberal education. This created two classes in society, both of which were abnormal : the first was a class of the elite who were educated, leisured, and cultured, who did not work with their hands and who lived a parasitic life of luxury by exploiting the masses; and the second was the vast bulk of the people who worked with their hands and produced most of the wealth of the country, but who were exploited and lived in poverty without liberal education, leisure, or access to the great cultural tradition. We are now trying to get rid of these wrong concepts, to provide education to all, and to integrate it with work so that the inequalities between the educated and the uneducated disappear and every citizen is a worker as well as an educated and a cultured individual with adequate leisure to pursue the higher goals of life. From this point of view, we must adopt a new value system which gives equal status to both intellectual and manual work and revise our wage-patterns accordingly. Similarly, we must provide education to all – not only to the elite groups, but to the masses as well. It is here that programmes of non-formal education play a very important

[7] *Ibid.*, 188.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

role because the proper education of all social groups is unthinkable in the absence of non-formal education.

Similarly, the traditional formal school is also based on the wrong assumption that work and education cannot go together and that life should be divided into two stages, the first, of all education and no work and the second, of no education and all work. Our view now is that there is no such dichotomy between education and work, that they mutually support each other in the sense that involvement in work leads to better education (the opposable thumb has done so much to develop the brain) and education leads to improvement in the quality of work, and that work and education are the two basic forces that have to mould the life of every individual concurrently from birth to death, and not consecutively as assumed in the traditional formal system. It is, therefore, necessary not only to transform the traditional formal school system, but also to develop large-scale programmes of non-formal education consistently with this new concept of work. This is of special importance in our country. It is unfortunate that our formal system of education was originally intended for the literary castes who looked down upon manual labour and were never involved in any processes of direct production. Consequently, it was totally divorced from work and this divorce still continues to dominate the system. Mahatma Gandhi highlighted this weakness of the system and pointed out that work and education were integrally related and that education could be best conveyed through the medium of work. This is why he enunciated his scheme of basic education where he tried to introduce work in the formal school system. The problem in non-formal education is somewhat different but equally significant. Here, we are not required to put work into education (because most of the educands in non-formal education are already working) but to build education round work (because what these persons need is education which will give a meaning to the work that they are doing and will help them to improve their efficiency and earnings). But whether we introduce work in the formal school system or build education round work in the non-formal education programmes, the basic principle is the same Gandhian maxim: work without education is a mechanical drudgery and education without work is a perpetuation of parasitism, exploitation, and violence.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The relationship between formal education and development has been the subject of a long debate. There was a time (and it is probably still not over) when development was equated to a mere growth in GNP; and on this assumption, it was found that formal education (which, in modern times, has necessarily emphasized scientific research and technological development) was related to development. It has been shown, for instance, that not all economic growth is explained by capital and labour and that there is a large residual factor which can only be explained in terms of education, mostly provided by the formal school. In the development of societies, therefore, a critical take-off stage is soon reached when an advance in education, science, research, and technology leads to a growth in GNP which, in its turn, makes larger amount available to education and helps it to advance. This golden circle has been established already in all the developed countries where the Education-Research-Productivity-Education spiral is in full operation. In the developing countries, formal education is not necessarily related to productivity so that an expansion of education often goes counter to productivity and makes further expansion of education neither desirable nor possible. Hence, a major programme of the reform of the formal school is to link education to productivity through better teaching of science, introduction of work-experience, vocationalization, on-the-job training, and promotion of research. It was, therefore, but quite proper that these programmes were highlighted by the Education Commission (1964-66).

While this is necessary, it is not enough because the very concept of 'development' is now changing. We no longer equate development with economic growth, and we would like to include social, cultural, and political development as a part of the comprehensive development which man needs. Similarly, we no longer equate development with industrialization (or even modernization) and do not think that the modern industrial society is a good model. We are searching for a new mode of development and a new model of a society where ideas of Gandhi are very relevant. Similarly, we now attach great significance to equality and justice. In the earlier days, we emphasized a

growth in GNP even if it was accompanied by greater inequalities of income distribution. In fact, there was a view that inequalities must first increase if economic growth was to be secured. Today we desire to build up social justice as an integral part of the development process itself and to ensure that societies are free from exploitation and violence. Formerly, we emphasized consumerism and the growth of goods and services. Today, we emphasize the development of man himself and his transcendence over material goods. What is even more significant, we now attach equal importance to means as well as to ends and not only to ends as in the past. The methods of development, viz., involvement of people in the process of development, making them aware of the social reality, enabling them to discover tentative solutions, organizing them and assisting them to evolve and implement tentative solutions to their problems are all as important as the results of development itself.

In this changed concept of development or the search for a new social order, it is easy to see that formal education needs several reforms. The first is to relate education with productivity. The second is to emphasize equality of educational opportunity and to ensure that the benefits of the formal system go equitably to all sectors of the population; and the third is to see that the educational system does not promote elitism, that it imbues the educated persons with love and compassion for the masses, and that it creates in them a firm commitment for their service. As is well known, all these programmes were greatly emphasized by the Education Commission (1964-66).

But what needs to be highlighted here is the even more important and direct role which programmes of non-formal education have to play in relation to the new concept of development. As many as five aspects of the problem need attention in this context. The first is that non-formal education yields *immediate* results as compared to formal education. The formal school is a process of slow and long-term gestation : we begin with young children and results become available only after 15-20 years when they grow into young men and adults. On the other hand, the results of non-formal education which mainly involve young men and adults are available much earlier, say, in one to five years. Developing countries which are running short of time cannot afford to ignore this great advantage which non-formal education has over the formal system.

The second point is that non-formal education can be used to train the new leadership that is coming to power in developing countries. In many cases, these leaders have received but little formal education and are unprepared for their jobs. It is hardly possible to put them through formal school – many of them are middle-aged or even older – and equip them for the heavy responsibilities of economic growth, social development, or nation-building. But non-formal education programmes of education can be suitably devised for this purpose, and they should really be developed and implemented on a priority basis.

The third point relates to development as the core content of non-formal education. We all know that education does not always lead to development and that, in some cases, education may even hinder development. On the other hand, there can be 'development' without education. In one Indian State, the improvement of village roads was made the responsibility of the police department; and though the programme was well implemented, there was no education to the people. The way in which the family planning programme was implemented under the emergency is another example of development with no education and even with mis-education. Contrary to such undesirable situations, non-formal education integrates education and development : its programmes are generally built round developmental tasks and its objective is to help people to see and define their problems and to solve them. In fact, a good motto for non-formal education is : education through reconstruction and reconstruction through education. On the one hand, non-formal education accelerates and effectively implements the programmes of development; on the other, it is development which provides the materials for non-formal education to grow to its proper stature and to achieve its objectives.

The fourth point is that the programmes of non-formal education involve people intimately with developmental activities. Unfortunately, we have taken a managerial view of development so far, i.e., development is something which the people receive passively and which is created for them by some other managerial groups such as the bureaucracy or the voluntary social workers. It is not denied that change agents have a significant role to play in social transformation. But the transformation

never takes place until the people themselves are deeply involved in the change process. This is best done through programmes of non-formal education which involve the people themselves actively in bringing about social changes. In fact, their basic aim is to change people rather than deliver some predetermined targets.

The fifth and probably the most important point is that, while formal education is inherently inclined to maintain the status quo and to favour the well-to-do, programmes of non-formal education tend to help the poor and oppressed groups to become aware of the exploitative reality, to organize themselves, and to be free. It is significant that the concept of the pedagogy of the oppressed was developed by Paolo Freire while creating programmes of non-formal education and that his techniques, though they can be applied to formal education, are really at their best in programmes of non-formal education.

It must be pointed out that the methods of Paolo Freire are not accepted by all educationists. Some are of the view that we must make a distinction between education and direct political socialization; and they think that Paolo advocates direct political socialization rather than education. It is also argued that no State will allow political indoctrination of the type Paolo advocates within its educational system. On the other hand, there are many educationists who believe that no education is politically neutral and that, unless some positive elements for the creation of an egalitarian society are included, education tends to protect the status quo. They are therefore of the view that programmes of non-formal education for the under-privileged groups must try to create an awareness of the exploitative reality in their minds and must help them to organize themselves and to fight for their rights. They also hold that the State in India, which represents all classes (including the poor), will or should allow the use of the pedagogy of the oppressed. One regrets that field experiments of this type are too few in India.

It may be mentioned here that Mahatma Gandhi believed that all education should have a political content[9] in the sense that it should inculcate a deep commitment to basic values and give the people courage to fight against all injustice and wrongs

[9]For a detailed discussion of the subject, see Appendix I.

through the peaceful and non-violent methods of *satyagraha.* In fact, Gandhiji really conducted a campaign of non-formal education outside the formal system between 1920 and 1947. At that time, the formal education tried to preach, directly or indirectly, the superiority of England over India in almost every field and to inculcate a loyalty to the Crown. When, in spite of these attempts, some sentiments of nationalism began to grow among the students and teachers, it designated them as 'indiscipline' and tried to suppress them. In the social field, the main policy of government was that of neutrality. It was because of this weak political content or the failure to conscientise the people that the education system helped to preserve the status quo rather than to promote rapid egalitarian change. This is the main reason why Mahatma Gandhi advised students to leave schools and colleges if they wanted to serve the country and established independent institutions outside the formal educational system to give national education and to train freedom-fighters.

It might be pointed out, however, that, in spite of this failure of the educational system, the Indian people did manage to get a political education which, in the long run, helped them to win freedom. This happened outside the school system, in the freedom struggle which Gandhiji organized. Here the people participated in their millions and got political education through personal involvement, a case of 'learning by doing'. Gandhiji was, therefore, the best exponent of non-formal education the country has ever had and India after Gandhiji was vastly different from the India before him. It was the 'political literacy' he spread among the people that enabled us to become a sovereign democratic republic.

METHODS OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

The methods of non-formal education necessarily raise issues about workers, their training programmes, materials used and their production, teaching and evaluation, organization and finance. These will be discussed in the next chapter. Here, it is necessary to emphasize one point, viz., they are radically different from those used in the formal system. This is due to the special features of non-formal education in which it differs from formal

education and to which reference has been made earlier, namely, emphasis on learning, larger use of part-time and own-time channels, use of non-professionals as teachers, absence of captive audiences, need to emphasize diversity, flexibility and elasticity, integration with work and development, use of non-educational institutions and processes, and the need for decentralized approaches. All these differences make it more difficult to organize the programmes of non-formal education than those of formal education; and these difficulties are increased still further, partly because the educands in non-formal education are mostly workers and under-privileged groups and partly because the dividing line between non-formal education and political socialization often tends to become thin. The evolution and use of these new, imaginative, and dynamic methods is the basic challenge which non-formal education presents to the teacher, the administrator, and the planner.

It may be recalled that, in our comprehensive programme of educational reform, we are not going to leave the formal system unchanged. We propose to carry out a radical reform of formal education even as we are trying to develop new programmes of non-formal education or modernize the traditional ones. The new methods are, therefore, equally needed for the reform of the formal school also. We have to evolve new, imaginative, and dynamic methods of organizing teaching (or learning), in both the formal and non-formal channels.

How shall we set about this task and where shall we begin, in the formal or non-formal sector? In the formal sector, with which we are more familiar, the main difficulties arise from the tremendous inertia of the system which has grown to such huge dimensions and has become such a rigid monolithic structure that an immense amount of energy and money is needed to bring about the desired change. We do not seem to have this energy, nor can we afford this cost even now. As time passes, the size and rigidity of the system grows and the cost and energy required to change it increases, even as our ability to attempt the change appears to become less. These problems do not appear in the non-formal sector which is new and comparatively small and which, therefore, gives us a good opportunity to bring about the desired educational reforms. Once this experience is gained, it can be of immense use in changing the formal education

system itself. In 1921, Gandhiji advised teachers and students to leave the official system of education and to establish a national system of education outside it so that eventually the entire official system could be nationalized. The basic idea was that the movement for the reform of the official education system should begin outside it, and should be developed to such a magnitude that it can be used to capture and reform the official system itself. This effort did not succeed for several reasons, the principal one being that the national schools were too few to make any tangible impact on the system. But if we learn from the errors of this experiment and develop non-formal education in a big way, there is no doubt that we shall be training the personnel and gaining the valuable experience which will enable us to reform the formal system of education itself in the long run.

An illustration or two will show what I have in mind.

(1) *Curriculum Construction :* At present, we follow a centralized system of curriculum development in the formal sector. At the school stage, the curriculum is prepared at the national level by the NCERT, adopted at the State level, and then handed down to all schools for implementation. At the university stage, we prepare curricula at the university level and then ask the colleges to use them. This method will not work in non-formal education where the curricula will have to be designed to suit the local needs and to solve the immediate problems of the educands and where the educands themselves will have an effective hand in framing the curricula of their studies. The non-formal education programmes will begin, not by preparing curricula at a centralized place, but by transferring the skill to construct curricula to the local level, not by giving a ready-made curriculum to the teacher, but by training him to prepare the curriculum for himself in collaboration with his students. Once such concepts gain ground and the people and workers become familiar with them, it will be comparatively easy to extend the experience and expertize to the formal sector also, at both the school and the university stages.

(2) *Activity, Thinking and Problem-Solving :* One of the major weaknesses of the formal system is that the school assigns a passive role to the students and expects them merely to remember and to reproduce. There is little attempt to make the students think for themselves or to introduce activities, especially those

built round work, development, or problem-solving. The teacher-student relationship is, therefore, unsatisfactory. In the formal system, as Paolo Freire points out,

(1) The teacher teaches and the students are taught.
(2) The teachers know everything and the students know nothing.
(3) The teacher thinks and the students are thought about.
(4) The teacher talks and the students listen meekly.
(5) The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined.
(6) The teacher chooses and enforces his choice and the students comply.
(7) The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher.
(8) The teacher chooses the programme content and the students (who were not consulted) adopt it.
(9) The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own professional authority, which he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students.
(10) The teacher is the subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects.[10]

As was pointed out earlier, the programmes of non-formal education will have to begin on an entirely different note, with the teacher acting as a facilitator or a joint partner, in the process of discovery, with a good deal of activity built round work and development and with the students deeply involved in problem-solving. Once such methods are evolved, get known, and acquire prestige, they can be extended to the formal school also with comparative ease.

Several other illustrations of this type can be easily given. But they are hardly necessary. What has been said already is enough to establish the point that the new methods needed for non-formal education are significant for formal education also and can be extended later to the formal sector as well. But we must guard against one real danger, viz., the possibility that the formal sector which is well entrenched may cast its shadow over the newly born non-formal sector, and instead of allowing it

[10]Paolo Freire, *Padagogy of the Oppressed*, Penguin Books, Ltd., Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1972, ppl 46-47.

to grow in freedom, may impose its own rigid methods on the non-formal programmes themselves. This danger is all the greater because the people, and especially teachers and educational administrators, find it extremely difficult to liberate their minds from the school-bound concept of education and from all the forms, rituals, doctrines, and terminology associated with it. I have also found that school teachers (and they are the majority among the workers who are now conducting non-formal educational programmes) merely carry the methods of the formal school to the non-formal classes they conduct so that they fail rather than succeed. If these trends are continued unchecked, we shall lose the possibility of using non-formal education to reform the formal school. Instead, we shall be formalizing the non-formal programmes themselves. We cannot, therefore, be too vigilant or careful in this regard.

BRIDGES AND STATUS

It has been proposed earlier that formal and non-formal education should not be developed as separate and parallel streams but should be integrated into a single *Educational System for the Society*. This has two implications : (1) There must be adequate bridges to enable a free movement from one stream to the other; and (2) both streams should have equal status.

In order to provide mobility from non-formal to formal education and vice-versa, several steps will have to be taken. At present, the formal system has a single-point entry at the school stage (class I) and only a limited number of entry-points at the later stages. These generally coincide with the public examinations at the end of class X (or class XI), class XII, and the first and second degrees. A person, who is required to step off the formal system at some stage or other for personal reasons, now runs into three difficult problems: (1) he loses status and becomes a 'drop-out'; (2) he does not always find non-formal education programmes where he can continue his studies even when he wants to; and (3) he cannot again return to the formal system at a later stage. It is, therefore, necessary to introduce the following reforms:

(1) The formal system should function on the basis of multiple-entries; and it should be possible for an individual to join it at

any point if he gives adequate evidence of his ability to profit by the instruction provided at that point.

(2) The programmes of non-formal education should be available to every person who may step off from any point in the formal system and may desire to continue his studies further. In fact, the social objective should be to develop non-formal education programmes on so large a scale and in so great a variety that every person who desires to learn something will have the facilities to do so.

(3) All public examinations held in the formal system should be thrown open to private candidates who may have studied, in whatever way was possible, outside the formal school.

In a system of this type, it is easy to see that the present unhappy phenomenon of 'drop-outs' will simply disappear. When a person steps off the formal system, he is not a 'drop-out' : he is merely changing his channel of instruction from the formal to the non-formal; and he can return to the formal stage, if he so desires, at any later stage. It will thus become possible for a person to change from the formal to the non-formal system, and vice-versa, at any point according to his convenience.

The problem of giving an equality of status to programmes of non-formal education is more difficult. Here, the most important question is that of attitudes. During the past hundred years we have been conditioned to look upon the school as the *sole* place of acquiring learning; and even when other alternatives become available, we still look upon the school as the 'real thing' and consider the alternative channels as inferior imitations. It is these attitudes that make us over-value a course of formal education and de-value one of non-formal education even when both courses have the same certification and content. A graduate, for instance, who has got his degree by full-time study in a college is considered better than another who got it by private study. We must get rid of these attitudes and learn to judge a person by his actual performance without any reference to the stream in which he received his education. If anything, we should give greater credit to those who have learnt through non-formal channels because they have shown greater self-reliance and initiative.

Differentials of status also arise from the fact that we over-value liberal education (which the formal system mostly provides)

and pay it high while we under-value vocational education (which is largely in the non-formal sector) and pay it as a poor relation. We also look 'up' to intellectual work and 'down' upon manual labour. Consequently, weavers of beautiful carpets in Kashmir or of lovely *saris* in Banaras, whose skills surpass those of B.As., M.As., or even Ph.Ds., receive no equivalence or respect from the formal educational system and the market gives them an unfair wage which is much below that of white-collar workers of far less capacity. There is no reason why excellence like this in programmes of non-formal vocational education should not be given equivalence in the formal system, why persons so educated should not be appointed as teachers in appropriate positions in the formal systems, why they should not be given equivalent degrees, and why they should not have an equivalence in public esteem and comparable wages.

Perhaps the largest differentials of status are created by the presence or absence of formal certification which links education with employment. At present, the formal school system has a virtual monopoly to certify such attainments and it uses this authority with reference mostly to the students within the formal stream. Secondly, such certification is closely linked, in terms of qualifications prescribed, with jobs available in the organized sector; and the employers also, whether public or private, tend to consider such certification as basic in the selection of candidates. This combination of circumstances links education in the formal school with certificates of attainment which have acquired a social prestige and are connected with the better-paid and more secure jobs in the organized sector. The non-formal stream, on the other hand, is without any certification (or with certification that has little or no status) and is linked mainly with the ill-paid and insecure jobs in the unorganized sector. One view, therefore, is that unless this position is changed, and programmes of non-formal education are linked with a system of certification and, through it, to good employment, they will not attain an equality of status with the formal school.

Several alternatives have been put forward in this context, especially with a view to equalizing the status of formal and non-formal channels.

(1) One group of educationists has suggested that the system of certification of individual attainments should be abolished

altogether and that the State should refuse to give any certificates, diplomas, or degrees. The community would then be able to judge the attainments of each individual on the basis of the institution or persons with whom he studied or on the basis of his actual performance. This is generally the practice which is now being followed in many programmes of non-formal education, and they see no reason why a similar system should not be adopted with regard to the formal sector as well. While the proposal looks attractive, it may not work in practice. The system may be feasible in small communities where every one knows everyone else and where the level of skills required is comparatively simple. But it is doubtful whether this negative solution will be able to deliver the goods in the large and complex modern societies.

(2) The alternative suggestion is that the system of certification should continue, but the monopoly which is now given to the formal system to certify such attainments should be abolished and it should be open to all institutions and individuals to issue such certificates if they desire to do so. It is felt that a competitive system of this type will ensure that every programme of education, whether formal or non-formal, will receive due attention and that the public will soon be able to judge the value of the certificates given by individuals or institutions on the basis of the performance of their products. This proposal is even more unsatisfactory than (1) above. It will create a plethora of certifying institutions or individuals which will confuse rather than help the public. Moreover, many of these certifying agencies would not have the capacity to do the job well and may exploit innocent persons or do considerable social harm. It is also argued that, once the formal system begins to certify, its prestige is so great that certificates of other agencies will not carry equal weight and the existing inequalities of status between formal and non-formal education will still continue. For instance, even today, there is no monopoly of certification vested in the formal system at the school stage and it is only the award of degrees that has been vested in the university system. But not many certifying agencies have come up at the school stage, and none of those that have been created has acquired or hopes to acquire the prestige of the formal system. In other words, this anarchic proposal will create several new problems without solving the basic issue of the inequality of status.

(3) A third alternative is that the system of certification of individual attainments should continue and that the authority for it should be vested, not in the formal sector, but in the new school system which will have integrated, within itself, all the three channels of formal, non-formal, and incidental education. Moreover, such certification should be accorded to all different categories of attainments, irrespective of the stream where they were acquired – formal, non-formal, and incidental. Moreover, no single institution should be vested with a monopoly to certify attainments. On the other hand, this authority should be vested in all adequately equipped institutions, each of which will exercise the authority in its own fields and it should be a deliberate policy to decentralize and broad-base the use of this authority as widely as possible. A comprehensive reform of this type will make a coordinated and dependable system of certification available to all streams and place them on an equality of footing.

Even this last proposal is far from happy and very probably the real solution of the problem lies, not in linking non-formal education closely with employment through some form of certification, but in delinking all education – formal or non-formal – with employment. Let us not forget that the close links which now exist between employment and the formal sector are not quite healthy: they dominate the entire educational scene, make education a bread-and-butter affair and throw into background the other important objectives of education such as personal, social, or cultural development. Fortunately for us, it is these fundamental objectives that now dominate the programme of non-formal education which is only loosely related to employment, if at all. In trying to establish links between non-formal education and employment, through certification, we must be careful that non-formal education does not lose its existing essentially educational character. We should even strive to see that formal education also becomes less dominated by employment considerations. On the whole, we should move in the direction of delinking education from employment (which is really the economic right of each individual) so that education (whether formal, non-formal, or incidental) assumes its proper role of preparing an individual for life, including a vocation.

CHAPTER III

PROGRAMMES, ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

In this concluding chapter, we shall discuss in some detail the different types of programmes of non-formal education that need to be developed in India and their priorities, the problems of their organization, and the steps to be taken to ensure their vigorous and sustained implementation:

The programmes of non-formal education, which have an infinite variety, can be conveniently discussed under the following heads:

(1) Programmes whose objective is mainly to extend the coverage of the formal system, viz., programmes for the pre-school child, universalization of elementary education, and development of part-time and own-time channels at the secondary and university stages;
(2) Modernization of traditional programmes of non-formal education;
(3) Development of modern programmes of non-formal education; and
(4) Programmes of non-formal education intended for special categories of people, viz.,
    (a) Out-of-school youth in the age-group 15-25;
    (b) Adults;
    (c) Women; and
    (d) Emerging leadership.

The first three categories look at the problem from the point of view of content, while the last looks at it from the point of view of the educands. It is convenient to discuss these separately in spite of some obvious overlap between the two approaches.

EXTENSION OF THE COVERAGE OF THE FORMAL SYSTEM

As is well known, the coverage of the formal system of education is very limited; it excludes all workers by its insistence on full-time attendance; and it also excludes all poor persons who cannot afford the expenditure on opportunity costs which it involves. Since the costs of formal education are high, we do not have the resources to bring all persons under the formal system of education. It is not also a question of money only, because formal education, which assumes dichotomy between work and education, can never bring all workers to school or provide life-long education. It is in this predicament that non-formal education has a major role to play: it can help us to extend the coverage of the formal system of education considerably with efficiency and economy.

(1) At the pre-school stage, our coverage is now about two per cent of the age-group. The provision of formal pre-school education is so costly that this coverage can be increased only marginally in the years ahead. It is, however, possible to organize community resources in women, money, and materials and to provide non-formal pre-school education to a far larger proportion of children than we can ever hope to do on the traditional formal lines. The details of these programmes have been discussed in Appendix II.

(2) At the elementary stage, it is a constitutional obligation to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age-group 6-14. But we have now been able to enrol only about 86 per cent of the children in the age-group 6-11 and only 36 per cent in the age-group 11-14. These are all-India averages, and in many parts of the country the enrolments are even lower. On the basis of the present system of formal elementary education, it will be next to impossible to introduce universal elementary education for years to come because a very large proportion of children drop out of the whole-time schools as they are required to work in or outside the family. Non-formal approaches can provide good part-time education to such children, reduce wastage, and help us to provide universal elementary education in the age-group 6-14 within a period of about 10 years and at a cost which we can afford.

The non-formal programmes to be developed at the elementary

stage to bring the non-attending children in the age-group 6-14 under instruction would include the following:

(a) Introduction of a multiple-entry system;
(b) Provision of part-time education for all children in the age-group 9-14 (who did not go to school or who left the school before attaining functional literacy) for a period of 18-24 months till they become functionally literate or complete class V; and
(c) Provision of part-time education for children in the age-group 11-14 who have completed class V and who are unable to continue their studies further on a full-time basis.

The details of these programmes have been discussed in Appendix III.

(3) At present, only about 20 per cent of the age-group 14-18 is studying in secondary schools and only about 4 per cent of the age-group 18-23 is studying in universities and colleges. There are several young persons and even adults who desire to have secondary and university education but they cannot attend the exclusively full-time institutions because they are required to work. In order to meet the needs of these social groups, it is necessary to develop non-formal channels of education at the secondary and university levels on the broad lines recommended by the Education Commission (1964-66) which said:

(a) All Board and University examinations should be thrown open to private candidates;
(b) Part-time courses in secondary and higher education should be organized wherever there is a demand;
(c) Correspondence courses should be encouraged at the secondary stage on a large scale. At the university stage also, the programme should receive emphasis on grounds of economy and social justice. Apart from some universities which will offer these courses at the national level through the medium of English or Hindi, at least one university in each region should provide higher education through the medium of the regional language.

It will be seen from the above discussion that non-formal education can help us to extend the coverage of pre-school education, to universalize elementary education, and to provide secondary and higher education to workers who cannot attend full-time institutions. These are no mean gains.

MODERNIZATION OF TRADITIONAL PROGRAMMES OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

While designing programmes of non-formal education for young persons in the age-group 15-25 or for adults, extension of programmes of formal education on a part-time or a self-study basis is only one and a comparatively minor aspect of the problem. It has to be emphasized that the vast bulk of the out-of-school youth in the age-group 15-25 and adults are now being educated through incidental education and traditional programmes of non-formal education and that it is of far greater significance to improve their incidental education and to modernize these programmes of non-formal education in order to bring about an early social transformation. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, both the formal education system meant for the select few and the non-formal education programmes meant for the masses were traditional. During the past 175 years, the formal system of education for the select few has been modernized and has, in its turn, modernized the elite groups who are its beneficiaries. On the other hand, the non-formal education programmes meant for the people (as well as their incidental education) continue to be traditional. Consequently, the masses still live the same traditional life of the old days. If we desire to modernize the society as a whole, we must (a) improve incidental education, (b) modernize these traditional programmes of non-formal education, and (c) also introduce new programmes of non-formal education to suit the needs and aspirations of the people and the country. This is both a quantitative and a qualitative problem; but its qualitative aspects are obviously of far greater significance.

Several measures will have to be taken from this point of view. The more important of these are briefly dealt with below.

(1) *Surveys:* The traditional forms of non-formal education are extremely varied and their prevalence is far larger than we generally think. Unfortunately, very little is known about them because they have not yet been studied comprehensively and in

depth. Such studies should now be undertaken on a large scale because not only are these forms legion, but they also differ from area to area and each of these forms needs to be studied separately in almost every area.

(2) *Vocational Forms:* A large number of the traditional forms of non-formal education are vocational in character and generally prepare the trainees for skilled or semi-skilled employment in the unorganized sector. For instance, it is through the non-formal channel of apprenticeship that farmers learn their agriculture; masons, weavers, or tailors learn their trades; health workers like village *dais* develop their skills; and so on. In fact, the formal channels in vocational education generally prepare skilled and semi-skilled workers for the modern organized sector (which is comparatively small) whereas the training of skilled and semi-skilled workers in the unorganized sector (which is very large) is done mostly through the non-formal sector. What needs emphasis is that we have to develop a very large programme of non-formal education through which the skills of workers in the unorganized sector are upgraded and they are provided with improved tools in order to provide better services or to improve their earnings. The advantages of these programmes are obvious. They cost very little; such programmes for farmers, carpenters, masons, or weavers can help to increase productivity to a far greater extent than formal vocational education; and the same can be said of all handicrafts which are admired all over the world and from which we earn a good deal of valuable foreign exchange. The training of functionaries like *dais* can raise the level of health services for rural areas with little additional investment. These programmes should, therefore, be developed on a very large scale and on a priority basis.

(3) *Cultural Forms:* The third issue refers to the traditional programmes of non-formal education which deal with cultural areas. Our traditional cultural forms in music, dance, painting, or sculpture had reached great peaks of excellence hundreds of years ago and they survive in our midst, in great glory, even to this day because of non-formal channels of education. Our great schools of music and dance continue to preserve and disseminate their tradition through non-formal channels. The folk drama was a great instrument of popular education in the past and it still holds an unrivalled place in the cultural life of rural areas. The

Madhubani paintings are a good illustration of the survival of our painting through non-formal channels, and so on. In these forms of traditional non-formal education in the cultural field, the problem is somewhat different from that of vocational education discussed above. Here the emphasis should be not so much on modernization as on preservation of our great heritage and its diffusion among the people. We should not ignore the fact that our tradition has been essentially one of a participatory culture. In the modern industrial societies, a kind of mass, vicarious culture has grown up; and we are trying to imitate it from the West and to introduce it in our society. This will have disastrous consequences; and there is no need to persist in this policy, especially when the West itself is recognizing the weaknesses of these developments and trying to revive participative culture.

(4) *General Education :* Outside the formal school, general education is provided by some traditional non-formal channels based on our oral tradition, which still survives, and through incidental education. It is through these that the average illiterate individual gets his world-view and information about religion, his society, his government, and all such matters that concern him. It is through these that he acquires his religious ideas or concepts and comes to share the current information or misinformation and superstitions about personal matters (health, disease, or food), natural phenomena, or social reality (caste, status and role of women, untouchability, social etiquette, relationships between different social groups such as rich and poor or landlord and tenant). It is also these channels that inculcate the current value system of the society in each individual. While the general education of a person attending the formal school can be planned to include correct scientific knowledge, to provide real insights into the exploitative, hierarchical, and inegalitarian social reality, and to inculcate desired values which are different from those that prevail in the society around (e.g., we can teach about equality of women in the school though the society outside may believe that women are inferior[1]), the general education through traditional non-formal and incidental channels leads only to conformity and to the perpetuation of the status

[1]It is a matter of regret that we do not utilize this potential of the formal system to the full; and this is one of the important directions in which a reform of the formal school is needed.

quo. The Indian society still continues to be traditional and feudal and still remains under the stranglehold of superstitions, irrational fears, and obsolete concepts that hinder modernization and development mainly because the vast bulk of its people who receive only the traditional non-formal and incidental education are brought up to accept the status quo and are educated to their station in society. That is why the modernization of the non-formal channels providing general education is both urgent and significant.

In this programme of modernizing the traditional forms of non-formal general education, it is necessary to emphasize three elements. The first is an additive task, viz., to provide information about essential matters which every citizen should know (e.g., basic information about the world, about our country, about our freedom struggle, re-interpretation of our tradition, etc.) which is not done in the existing non-formal channels. The second is the corrective task, viz., to undo the wrong information or superstitions that are kept alive in the existing non-formal channels. It is here that science has a role to play because it helps to dispel inrrational fear, to eradicate superstition, to inhibit fatalism, and to increase self-reliance. We must build non-formal channels round modern science and technology so that the people come to understand the right perspectives about personal matters (e.g., health, illness and its treatment, diet), natural phenomena (e.g., pollution, use of science for increased production, plant and animal life), and social problems (e.g., population growth). The third is the creative task, viz., to build up new attitudes and values that will help modernization and development, to create a proper understanding of the exploitative and inegalitarian social reality; and to motivate for a struggle to create a new social order based on freedom, equality, justice, and the dignity of the individual. This is obviously the most important task because it is these elements that convert an education which tends to perpetuate bondage into one that liberates.

DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN PROGRAMMES OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

While modernization of traditional programmes of non-formal education, as pointed out above, is necessary for upgrading

vocational skills, for preserving and diffusing cultural programmes, and for certain additive, corrective, and creative tasks in general education, it will not be sufficient. We shall have to introduce new forms of non-formal education as well, partly because such supplementation is needed for the traditional forms but mainly because several modern institutions which can be used with good effect in non-formal education are now available.

In this context, mention may be made of some programmes which are already on the ground and which may have to be improved and expanded. For instance, agricultural extension is an important modern programme of non-formal education. The family planning programme which tries to popularize the small family norm and equip married couples to limit their families is another example. Mention may also be made of new programmes that are needed but have not been organized so far such as programmes for citizenship education (the elections to various domocratic bodies are a good instance of considerable civic education that is being made available to the people through non-formal channels), for improving dietary and culinary practices, for improvement of environmental sanitation, for adoption of better child nursing practices, for eradication of social evils like practice of untouchability, and so on.

The mass media are an important channel of modern non-formal education. But we are not making full use of all their potential. The radio has now reached almost every village and there is considerable scope for its increased educational use. The film is an important and widespread medium, but its educational use is extremely limited and it often mis-educates rather than educates. The TV is just coming into the picture. All things considered, one gets the feeling that the problem needs close examination and an earnest and sustained effort is needed to use the mass media intensively for purpose of non-formal education.

The traditional programmes of non-formal education (which are supported by the incidental education generally provided in a traditional society) have three main weaknesses.

(1) They are intended to continue the status quo and to educate every individual to his status in society.
(2) They are also not based on science and technology so that

they tend to perpetuate outmoded technologies of the earlier days, obsolete beliefs and superstition, and resistance to change.

(3) Besides, both the teachers and students in these programmes are the traditional individuals from the masses themselves who perform the task of imparting their knowledge, skills, and beliefs to one another. This is, therefore, a game where the blind lead the blind.

We should try to eliminate these weaknesses through the modernization of traditional programmes and development of new programmes of non-formal education. The foregoing discussion will show that it will be possible to correct the first two weaknesses if we provide good general education by supplementing and correcting the traditional programmes where necessary and if we provide a good political content to non-formal general education. This cannot be done unless we seek committed workers from among the educated groups and properly train potential leaders from among the uneducated social groups themselves. This will remedy the third weakness.

SOME SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

There are certain important categories of people who stand in special need of non-formal education. Of these, we shall discuss four important categories, viz., (1) Out-of-school youth in the age-group 15-25; (2) Adults; (3) Women; and (4) Emerging leadership.

(1) *Out-of School Youth in the Age-Group 15-25:* In the age-group 15-25, only about 10 per cent of the young persons are now enrolled in secondary schools and colleges. The remaining 90 per cent of the youth are really the nation, but they have no access to any formal education at present. The significance of providing non-formal education to this large population of out-of-school youth in the age-group 15-25 is obvious. The size of this group is large, about 20 per cent of the total population. Its members are generally alert, inquisitive, impressionable, and capable of being inspired by emotional commitments to the service of the people and the country. As educands, therefore, they offer rich and potential material that is much easier to handle

than either children of younger age or adults. What is more important, the costs of an educational programme for them are comparatively less (for such education is necessarily part-time) and its returns immediate and effective because these young persons will become active and influential members of the society in five to ten years. These are important gains which developing countries like ours (which are pressed for time and have limited resources) cannot afford to ignore.

The content of non-formal education to be developed for this age-group will include:

- Improvement of vocational skills to enable them to increase their income;
- Citizenship or an understanding of the problems facing the society and the country;
- General education;
- Sports and games;
- Hobbies and recreation;
- Health and family planning; and
- Participation in programmes of social or national service.

This does not mean that every young person will be interested in all these problems. But, by and large, these will cover their broad interests. The curriculum for their education will have to be a mix of these and related matters and the success of the programme will depend essentially upon the 'fit' between the 'mix' capacities of the individuals for whom it is meant.

The educational level of this group of non-student youth shows immense variations. In the urban areas, they may include university graduates at one end and illiterate people at the other. In rural areas, only a small microscopic minority will be that of secondary school leavers; a small proportion would have received primary or middle school education, and the large bulk will be that of illiterates. It is, therefore, obvious that the educational programmes to be organized for them will have to be at all levels, from the primary to the university. By and large, these programmes will have to be part-time. But in many cases, short full-time courses can also be arranged with great advantage. Some additional details about this programme have been

discussed in Appendix IV.

(2) *Adults :* Programmes of adult or continuing education are of great significance, partly because they yield immediate results, partly because they help to expand and improve elementary education of children in the age-group 6-14, and partly because they help to improve incidental education at home and in society. To begin with, we may divide programmes of adult education into two parts : (1) Continuing education for those who have already completed elementary, secondary, and higher education; and (2) education of the poor and deprived groups which will include further education of those who are literates, literacy programmes, and even the further education of those who are illiterate and may not desire to acquire literacy. In so far as the first group is concerned, they have already received at least the minimum basic education which the Constitution provides. Their needs, though important, have obviously a lower priority, and have been excluded from this discussion. As the priority to be accorded to the continuing education of those who have already received secondary and higher education would be even lower, these also will be excluded from the discussion. But the highest significance should be attached to the educational needs of groups in the second category. These are proposed to be discussed in some detail. It is, however, necessary to emphasize that what is said here about adults will also apply to the programmes of non-formal education to be developed for out-of-school youth in the age-group 15-25.

Let us begin with literacy which it would be wrong to ignore. Literacy is very important, especially as it makes the individual largely autonomous to further learning. From the social point of view, literacy is even more important because a wholly literate society is qualitatively different from a largely illiterate society like ours. One should, however, make three reservations. The first is that mere literacy is not enough; it has to be accompanied by a good deal of general, vocational, and cultural education and also followed by similar education at a higher level. Secondly, a programme of non-formal education for adults should not begin with an over-emphasis on literacy. Such an approach often leads to a drop-out. For literacy education to succeed, there has to be a desire to be literate (as different from a desire to learn certain specific things for which literacy may not be an

absolutely necessary pre-condition) and it is much better to postpone concentration on literacy education till this point is reached. Thirdly, one should not even mind if, in some cases, this point is not reached at all. It is better to provide non-formal education without literacy than neither literacy nor non-formal education.

In a country like India, the liquidation of illiteracy is a very major programme of non-formal education and has great significance and priority. There would hardly be any difference of opinion on this score. The main issue, therefore, is to operationalize the programme: how do we organize it?

There are four possible approaches here, three of which were recommended by the Education Commission (1964-66).

(i) *The Mass Approach :* The first approach is to organize a mass movement to liquidate illiteracy in a specific time-bound programme. Even if this task is to be completed in a period of ten years, the number of persons to be made literate every year will be fantastically large, and the problem can be attempted only through a mass approach. This will involve, as the Education Commission said, a determined mobilization of all available educated men and women in the country to constitute a force to combat illiteracy and an effective organization and utilization of this force in a well-planned literacy compaign. Moreover, the responsibility for this massive programme which will go beyond the capacity of the administration and educational systems and responsibility must be squarely assumed by the political and social leadership and its success will depend upon the commitment of this leadership, its willingness to make the effort and sacrifice necessary for the purpose and upon the extent to which the adults are motivated to learn and the educated community is voluntarily and enthusiastically committed to teach. Such a campaign will also imply a tremendous effort by the education system, and by its teachers and students on whom the brunt of the effort will fall. Obviously, the programme will require an immense effort, determination, discipline, and sacrifice which is not easy to generate. If a mass campaign is attempted without these prerequisites, it degenerates into target-mongering, undesirable compulsions, falsified statistics, corruption, and other attendant ills.

(ii) *The Selective Approach :* The selective approach, on the other hand, means the organization of literacy work in selected

areas (where a good programme can be developed on the basis of the resources available) or for selected groups of people for whom it is advantageous to organize a programme (e.g., people employed on the construction of a dam). A third alternative is to work with institutions or groups which show commitment and to give financial support to the proposals made by them. Yet another alternative approach would be to begin with areas or groups where there is an indication of a desire to learn and then to set up the needed machinery for the purpose. We may also begin with specific organizations of workers or of employers and help them to evolve programmes to make all their members or employees literate; and so on. These programmes are more manageable and their costs do not become prohibitive. It is also easier to maintain proper standards in such programmes and to realize the objectives. It may also be pointed out that the selective approach does not necessarily imply a small size. It is different from the mass approach in that it does not try to reach everybody indiscriminately and that it lays down certain specific criteria for the selection of learners or workers.

(iii) *The Combined Approach :* A third alternative would be to combine both these approaches and to develop the mass approach in specific areas where conditions are favourable and the selective approach in the rest of the country.

There is of course a fourth approach which no one recommends, viz., what we are doing at present or have been doing since the attainment of independence. We have not placed adequate emphasis on the programme in spite of the fact that its costs are low (Rs.40-60 per adult male literate) and it can make a fundamental difference to social transformation. We spend less than one per cent of the total educational budget on adult literacy and make only about half a million literates every year. Apart from this smallness of the scale which makes no impact on the problem, its quality also leaves much to be desired. Consequently, the progress of literacy is very slow and we now have the dubious distinction of having more than half of the entire illiterate population of the world. Obviously, we must get away from this position and adopt any one of the proposals made by the Education Commission.

The expression 'literacy' has been understood so far to mean the three R's. But it is obvious that this concept will have to be

widened to include a good deal besides and should provide the individual concerned with knowledge, skills, and attitudes which will help him to work better and to increase his productivity, to improve his standard of living, to show a greater and more intelligent participation in civic life, to have a better understanding of nature and society, and, on the whole, to open the way to basic human culture. Both the acquisition and use of literacy will be facilitated under this wider concept. It is essential that the minimum education to be provided to all persons above the age of 15, who have missed the provision of full elementary education, should include literacy and general and civic education, upgrading of vocational skills, health education (including family planning), basic education in science and technology, physical education (including sports and games), and hobbies and recreation. It should involve him in programmes of social and national service, enable him to stand on his rights and assist him to liberate himself from oppression and exploitation. It is only when this education (which is the counterpart of the elementary education given to all children in the age-group 6-14) is provided to all the out-of-school youth and adults in the deprived groups that we will be able to bring about the radical social transformation we need and to create an egalitarian and just society.

(3) *Women:* The Constitution treats men and women as equals. But women still suffer from several handicaps and their de facto status is one of inferiority. The problem has been recently examined by the National Committee on the Status of Women whose excellent Report contains several valuable recommendations. These need implementation on a priority basis.

Basic to this programme is the spread of education among women, both formal and non-formal, and especially the latter. From this point of view, we should develop programmes similar to those which have been described earlier for men. But some programmes meant specially for women will have to be emphasized. Among these, mention may be made of provision of insights in the proper relationship between the sexes, de-learning of the wrong stereotypes of men and women, and creating a proper awareness of themselves. Programmes for better care and upbringing of children, family planning, preservation of food, nutrition, and improved culinary practices have special interest and significance for women. In all parts of the country, women

have almost a monopoly of certain economic activities (e.g., dairying or poultry). Special educational programmes for upgrading their vocational skills in such occupations as well as those which will enable them to enter other occupations will have to be developed. The training of women workers for delivery of health care services and for provision of non-formal pre-school education will have to be specially emphasized. Condensed courses which help women who have missed regular school to complete their formal studies in a short period and seek employment have been found to be useful; and there is urgent need to develop workers' education programmes for women workers in the organized industry.

(4) *Emerging Leadership:* A new leadership from the masses, and especially from rural areas, is now emerging in many walks of life. It is particularly growing in the political sphere where it is getting elected to membership of local bodies, state legislatures, and Parliament. Very often, it is found that this new leadership is not fully equipped to discharge the responsibilities which it has assumed. The development of non-formal education programmes for this social group with a view to enabling it to discharge its responsibilities satisfactorily is obviously a programme of high significance and priority. A similar group is that of 'opinion leaders' in rural areas who play a significant role in moulding community thinking and action in their localities. Their training through non-formal channels will have far-reaching consequences for development and social transformation.

The three special categories mentioned above, viz., out-of-school youth in the age group 15-25, adults, and women, are overlapping and are too broad. In the actual organization of the programmes of non-formal education, it will be necessary to identify small groups with common interests and capacities and to develop special programmes suited for them. This is not a difficult task, but the number, type, and variety of these groups is almost infinite. The success of non-formal education will obviously depend on the efficiency with which this is done.

ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Several important questions arise regarding the organization of non-formal programmes of education. These are related to the

institutions or agencies through which the programmes can be organized, the workers to be recruited and trained, the curricula to be adopted, the methods of teaching and evaluation, the teaching and learning materials needed, guidance and coordination, and finance. These will be briefly discussed in the paragraphs that follow:

(1) *Institutions:* Modern programmes of non-formal education can also be built round several institutions which have now come into existence. There are three distinct possibilities here.

(a) The formal system of education has now become a vast network which has reached almost all the parts of the country and has acquired immense resources. There are now about 700,000 educational institutions, nearly 100 million students, more than three million teachers, and buildings, playgrounds, and equipment worth millions of rupees. It is certainly possible and desirable to use these resources for purposes of non-formal education. One programme would be for each educational institution to devise suitable programmes of non-formal education for its own students through extra-curricular activities, involvement in social and national service, and development of student self-government. What is even more important, each educational institution can become a community centre and develop programmes of non-formal education for other members of its local community. For instance, an educational institution may conduct literacy programmes in the neighbourhood. Depending upon the resources available, it can conduct programmes in general education, vocational education, physical education, games and sports, or cultural and recreational activities. It can also make its resources in terms of buildings, playgrounds, equipment, library, and personnel available to the community for purposes of learning. In other words, the work of each educational institution should be planned in such a way that it makes the maximum use of its resources to provide full-time, part-time, and self-study programmes to all persons in the community who desire to learn. It should work throughout the day and also throughout the year. This is a programme

where a minimum of additional investment will make it possible to generate a fairly large programme of non-formal education for all sections of the community.

(b) There are many basically educational and cultural institutions which are outside the formal education system consisting of schools, colleges, and universities. These include libraries, museums, art galleries, youth clubs, mahila mandals, organizations for arranging lectures, of scouts and guides, and so on. This category of institutions also can organize several programmes of non-formal education, within their own field of competence, for the students of the formal system as well as for the out-of-school youth and adults.

(c) Finally, there are several non-educational institutions outside the formal educational system, and even outside the ministries and departments of education, which are basically non-educational but which can be used for educational purposes. These include factories, workshops, seed farms, dairies, hotels, transport organizations like airlines, railways, and bus companies, and so on. In fact, there is no social institution which cannot be advantageously used for some educational programmes, for some groups, and some occasions. This immense educational resource is very little used at present. We should try to exploit it to the full, through non-formal channels, for the benefit of students within the educational system as well as for all out-of-school youth and adults.

There are thus six different categories of non-formal education on the basis of the types of institutions that organize them and the clientele they cater to, as shown in table on page 65.

This will also show how the programmes of non-formal education cover *all* individuals *throughout* their lives and thus help in creating a learning society.

While the bulk of the programmes of non-formal education will necessarily have to be institutionalized[2] for operational reasons

[2]The expression 'institutions' used in this discussion covers both official and non-official institutions and organizations. As non-formal education programmes are essentially *open* and *voluntary* from every point of view, the voluntary institutions and organizations have a very major role to play in the development of non-formal education.

Six Categories of Non-formal Education Programmes

	Non-formal educational programmes organized in		
	Educational institutions within the formal education system	Educational institutions outside the formal education system	Basically non-educational institutions
For students within the formal system	1	3	5
For out-of-school youth and adults	2	4	6

it has to be emphasized that they need not necessarily be so. They can and should be organized on an individual basis also. There is no reason, for instance, why a bus driver should not conduct classes in music (if he is an expert in it) for those who want to learn this music from him. In fact, all such individual efforts should be encouraged because they will help us reduce the tyranny of institutions. We should really look forward to a stage when the bulk of the non-formal education programmes will be provided, not by institutions, but by individuals.

(2) *Agents :* Who will provide non-formal education?, is the next question. It is of course true that a good deal of this work will be done by the professional teachers in the formal education system. It is necessary to point out, however, that these teachers are at a handicap in non-formal education because the formal education system in India is being conducted at present on principles diametrically opposed to those of non-formal education. This handicap will become less as the formal education system becomes transformed. But in the present transitional stage, we should select only those teachers in the formal system who have the capacity to handle programmes of non-formal education with efficiency and success.

It is also necessary to remember that we need a very large number of teachers for non-formal education. In the first place, the number of students in the formal system of education is about 20 to 25 per cent of the population at the most. In non-formal channels, which cover the students in the formal system, as well as out-of-school youth and adults, the number of students is obviously much larger–about three to four times. Secondly, the size of the class in non-formal education (a good deal of which may even be individual instruction) is much smaller than that in the formal school. Consequently, the number of the classes required for non-formal education will be about five to ten times that in the formal system. We will, therefore, have to find non-teachers to work as agents of non-formal education even if every teacher in the formal system gets engaged in non-formal programmes also.

Another point to be emphasized is this: one major objective of non-formal education is to de-professionalize education. Ivan Illich has shown how professionalization makes a service costly in the first instance and then scarce so that the votaries of a profession, who ought to promote the service, ultimately end by becoming its worst enemies and by developing a vested interest to the contrary. For instance, it is the barefoot doctors that spread health services cheaply to the people. But as medicine gets professionalized, its costs increase so that health care becomes scarce and the doctors develop a vested interest in ill-health. The same happens in education also. As teaching becomes professionalized, teachers mystify their work unnecessarily, deny the right to teach to large number of persons who can teach well, and thus create an artificial scarcity. This enables them to demand higher wages in the first instance and smaller classes at the next stage so that the cost per unit tends to become very high. Finally, this results in curtailing the expansion of education because society does not have the money to pay for more teachers. In the last analysis, therefore, the teachers become, not the promoters of education but the enemies of its spread. Non-formal education which uses non-teachers as a matter of principle is, therefore, a good instrument to de-professionalize or at least to reduce the exclusive dominance of the profession in the formal education system.

Yet another point to remember is that, in the present system of formal education, there is a dichotomy and polarization between teacher and students. Students are those who do not teach and teachers are those who do not study. This polarization must disappear; and even in the formal system, we must look upon teachers as senior students and upon students as junior teachers. Fortunately, this is the position with which we begin in the programmes of non-formal education. We must conserve and develop this asset because we can then extend it to the formal system itself and help to transform it.[3]

Non-formal education must discover and train thousands and thousands of non-teachers as promoters of its programme. Where are these to come from?

Obviously, one important source is that of students in the formal education system. There is no reason to assume that students cannot teach or that they are not good teachers. In fact, there is every evidence to show that they are effective teachers and became better students because of their teaching. Moreover, students at all stages can teach. In the primary schools of India, there was a monitorial system under which every new student that came was assigned to a senior student who taught him and gave him personal guidance under the general direction of the teacher. The system worked very well. The students in middle schools have done excellent work as literacy teachers, particularly for women. Students of secondary schools and colleges have conducted literary classes and continuation education classes for school drop-outs, young persons, and adults. At all stages, the brighter students have been successfully used to give personal tuition and guidance to the weaker students in their own class or lower classes. Similarly, students have successfully provided a variety of services to the community including education. It is easy to see that students can and should be trained and used for programmes of non-formal education. This work can be purely voluntary; and even if it is paid on an honorarium basis, the costs of the programme will go down considerably. In addition, there will be the priceless gain of giving good education

[3]I must also emphasize that non-formal education is essentially a system of 'learning together' and that a 'teacher' is not essential for every learning group. In fact, the objective of our policy should be to move towards a situation where groups of learners organize the programmes and no 'agents' as such are needed.

to the students and of sensitizing them to social problems and to their social responsibilities.

A major programme to be developed in this context is to involve the youth in programmes of non-formal education. There is now a tremendous awakening among the young persons, both in school and out of school, and we shall be losing a great opportunity if we fail to harness their energies and talents to national development. The programmes of non-formal education can serve a double purpose in this context. On the one hand, they will bless the deprived groups which need non-formal education; and, on the other, they will bless the youth themselves who will grow with this opportunity to serve.

Programmes of non-formal education have the advantage that they can use all educational resources of the community and especially those outside the formal education system (teachers and students). Depending upon the programme, therefore, we will have to cast our net very wide and rope in, as agents of non-formal education, all persons who have the necessary skills, irrespective of the fact whether or not they are qualified to be teachers in the formal system. For instance, it is possible to use all persons in the medical profession as teachers in programmes of non-formal education in health. All professionals in the field of agriculture as well as good agriculturists can be used for the work of agricultural non-formal education or extension. All persons who know a vocation well can be used to teach that vocation and to upgrade the vocational skills of those engaged in it. A person who can sing or play a game well can impart his skill to another who desires to learn it; and so on. In programmes of non-formal education, therefore, an attempt has to be made to rope in, *not* only all institutions outside the formal education system, but also all individuals outside the formal education system, both as teachers and as students. It is the philosophy of non-formal education that every person can and should be a life-long student and that he should also be given opportunities to share his knowledge and skills with another who desires to learn them. Non-formal education thus tries to create a learning society where every one becomes a life-long student and also a life-long teacher, sharing his knowledge and skills with others.

It has to be emphasized that 'peer' learning is an important technique of non-formal education, especially among the out-

of-school youth. In other words, a teacher is not so effective in dealing with this group as a group leader himself can be. The most successful results have, therefore, been obtained in programmes where the education of this group of non-student youth is organized by selecting group leaders from their own midst, training them in brief but intensive courses, and then helping them to put the programme across to their peers. The technique can obviously be extended to most other groups.

The attitude of a professional teacher in the formal education system is that of a person who guards his knowledge zealously and is unwilling to share it with others, except for a price. He is like a cobra who sits on a treasure and guards it. In the non-formal system, the attitude of the teacher is that of a person who is delighted to share his knowledge with another for the pure joy of such sharing because he knows that, in a true educational process, the teacher receives as much from the student as the student from the teacher. He is, therefore, like Archimedes who, as soon as he discovered his principle while in a bath-tub, ran out in the streets of Athens, even unmindful of his nudity, and shouted, 'I have found it, I have found it' and tried to share his joy with everyone else. Once we create his atmosphere in the non-formal stream, it will be possible to recreate it in the formal system as well.

(3) *Training of Agents, Materials, Methods of Teaching, and Evaluation:* Once the institutions and individuals to be involved in programmes of non-formal education are identified and the agents located, we have to address ourselves to the task of preparing materials, evolving appropriate programmes of teaching, and evaluation and training of the agents. Some helpful suggestions in this regard can be discussed here.

It will not be desirable to assign the task of producing materials for non-formal education to departmental agencies dealing with the formal system. Because of the radically different approaches needed in the programme, they may not be in a position to do justice to it. It is, therefore, desirable to entrust this work to a new and preferably voluntary agency which has a special aptitude and capacity for the programme. On the other hand, it is equally undesirable for this agency to function in isolation from the official system. It is also necessary to link it, in some suitable fashion, with the official agency also. All things considered, the

present scheme of the Ministry of Education under which a non-official agency with the necessary expertize and contacts is selected for the purpose of establishing a *State Resources Centre for Non-Formal Education* and then linked appropriately to the State Government and the State Education Department is a very happy device. It must be emphasized, however, that this is a transitional phase. As the programme and expertize expands, it will ultimately be necessary to have resource centres in each district.

The materials for non-formal education, it may be noted, are best produced in the course of the development of the programmes. The State Resources Centre can guide the production of these materials and refine them, if necessary. On the other hand, such materials may be produced by the Centre and then used by actual workers with such modifications as may be needed. Under any circumstances, the process of materials production is one of continuous action and reaction between the Resources Centre and programme agents who use or produce them. It thus becomes important for the Centre to maintain a close liaison with all field work activities.

The question of training the workers also gets linked up with that of materials production, because an important part of the training of workers of non-formal education is to give them the skills of curriculum construction and materials production. The States Resources Centres are expected to function also as training organizations. This is as it should be. But we need several more agencies for the purpose. One way out would be to utilize all centres where a programme is in operation at a fair level of efficiency as training bases for creating additional workers. In fact this non-formal method of training by making an individual participate in an on-going programme is even better than institutionalization and formal training.

Can we use the existing teacher-training institutions for the purpose? Perhaps, not. At present, they are not even well equipped to do the job of training teachers for the formal system. They have no idea of non-formal education and its programmes. The first step necessary, therefore, is to work with the training institutions themselves, make them accept the new concepts of non-formal education, and help them to change their courses, materials, and methods accordingly. This will be a great

gain in itself and to the formal education system; and when that happens, we may start using these training institutions for purposes of non-formal education also.

We need not make a fetish of teaching methods. The formal system has done enough damage to itself by over-emphasizing formal teaching and there is no purpose in repeating all these mistakes over again. Let us not forget that many non-formal programmes of education are far more successful than the formal ones. Let me take the case of an illiterate mother teaching her daughter to cook. If one were to compare this process to that in a home-science class in a middle or secondary school, one would find that the work of the illiterate mother is superior. She uses the least equipment; the wastage is the lowest; the costs are almost marginal or nil; and the result is almost one hundred per cent. This analogy can be extended to several other programmes. Children, for instance, remember almost everything that their grand-mother told them; and they survive and succeed for the simple reason that they manage to forget a very large part of what is taught in the school. We must lay down only a few guidelines for the methods of teaching in a non-formal programme. It may be said, for instance, that work in a non-formal education programme is

- a joint endeavour of teachers and students or of students themselves;
- built round some work or task of development;
- oriented to problem-solving;
- developed through discussions rather than lectures;
- voluntary;
- flexible enough to suit the local situation; and
- individually oriented to each participant.

Within such a broad framework, we should leave it to each group to design its own methods.

There need be no external evaluation in a non-formal programme, except where the participants have prepared themselves for an examination in the formal system. All evaluation should be by the participants themselves; and it would of course be open to them to invite an external evaluation, if they so desire. Proposals for distributing certificates should also be discouraged

rather than encouraged. On the whole, the idea should be to encourage an attitude where a participant feels that learning is its own joy and reward.

(4) *Guidance and Coordination :* The concept of 'inspection' which dominates the formal system should not be adopted in the non-formal sector. Even the idea of 'supervision' should be played down. What we really need is a system of coordination and guidance services to each programme and this should be organized on an elastic and decentralized basis. We should try to locate the guidance machinery separately for each programme, on the merits of each case, and bring together all the resources available locally (or within a convenient distance) for purposes of guidance. The State Resources Centre may act as a coordinating point in the first instance.

(5) *Finance:* The programmes of non-formal education have two advantages; the cost per unit in these programmes is generally low because of the use of informal techniques and non-professionals or students as teachers. The over-all costs also get reduced because of the use of all available social resources – human, institutional, and material – for educational purposes. But even then, the programmes will cost quite a large amount. Although a portion of this additional expenditure will come from non-governmental sources and the students themselves, the bulk of the funds required will have to be provided by the State.

One point of priority needs to be mentioned. Non-formal education programmes are needed by all: the well-to-do as well as the poor, the educated as well as the uneducated. There is quite a probability that non-formal education programmes will be developed first, and on a large scale, for the educated and the well-to-do. There need be no objection to this, provided the beneficiaries of these programmes bear all the costs involved and no burden, direct or indirect, is thrown on the public exchequer. The State funds available should be used exclusively for the poor and deprived groups.

CONDITIONS ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESS

We have now reached almost the end of this project the objective of which was to spell out some perspectives on non-formal education. Before closing, however, a brief reference to four major

issues is called for.

First : We should be absolutely clear in our objective. We do not propose only to add a few programmes of non-formal education, costing a marginal amount, to the massive system of formal education. On the other hand, we want to utilize non-formal education as an instrument of a total reform of education and society. In particular, we would like to use this channel to educate and organize the poor and the deprived groups so that they can liberate themselves and improve their standards of living and help us to move in the direction of creating a more equitable and just social order.

Second : We also would like to use non-formal education for bringing about a reform in formal education itself and to create a new integrated educational system which will have all the three channels of formal, non-formal, and incidental education linked up with proper bridges and other transfer mechanisms. Every individual will have the right and appropriate facilities to learn all throughout his life and he will be able to move from one channel to the other according to his choice and need. Such a system will create a learning society and provide life-long education for all.

Third : Programmes of non-formal education will have to be organized in a massive way in formal educational institutions, in educational institutions outside the formal system, and in all other non-educational institutions in the society. The agents of non-formal education will also have to be found in all the social groups and ultimately every individual will have to be both a life-long student and a teacher. The programmes will have to be organized on a decentralized plan and on the principles of elasticity, freedom, and dynamism.

Fourth : If all of what is said above is to be achieved, success is not going to be either easy or quick. In fact, whether or not we succeed will itself depend upon five major factors.

(1) The first is a question of basic philosophy. Our faith in the common man of India and his potential. To many a person from the intelligentsia, the poor in India appear to be an unnecessary evil, an irrelevance to be thrown out, an inconvenient presence which is better put out of sight and out of mind and a pest that is better not born. No programmes of non-formal education for the masses can grow out of such an attitude. We must, there-

fore, develop not only compassion for, but also a faith in the poor man of India. He is really the nation, and the future of the country depends more upon him than upon the minority of the educated elite. The more widespread this faith becomes, the greater is the possibility of success in programmes of non-formal education.

(2) The second is a question of status and quality. Non-formal education should not be looked upon as education for other people's children or for people of no significance. It has to be given a status equivalent to that of formal education, if not better. This can happen only if its quality is maintained at the highest level, if proper bridges are built between it and the formal system of education at appropriate points, and the economic, political, and social rewards of non-formal education are made comparable to those of the formal system.

(3) The third is a question of scale. Modern programmes of non-formal education are meant for the vast majority of our people. They will, therefore, have to be developed in a very big way and their coverage would have to be even larger than that of the formal system. Running a few schools or centres, however good, will not serve the purpose; and if an effective dent is to be made on the situation, programmes of non-formal education would have to be developed on a very massive scale.

(4) The fourth is a question of investment. It will not be possible to develop the programmes of non-formal education on the large scale required and to maintain their quality unless the nation is prepared to invest in them on an equally massive scale. It may not be possible to raise all the resources required for non-formal education if the formal system of education is also allowed simultaneously to grow and consume additional resources. In such an eventuality, there should be no hesitation to go slow with the further extension of the formal system of education (because more than 60 per cent of the resources invested therein go down the drain) and to divert the bulk of additional resources available to the development of the programmes of non-formal education.

(5) The fifth and the last question refers to the investment of human resources. Money is never the most important investment in education. What the learners invest therein, a large proportion of their entire life, is a priceless and unparalleled investment. What they get out of it will depend very largely on the

extent to which we invest the time of our most talented and committed persons for the development of educational programmes. The success and quality of the programmes of non-formal education will, therefore, ultimately depend upon the extent to which our talented young men and women find it worthwhile to commit themselves to its development in the service of the poor man of India.

What are likely to be the future developments in non-formal education in the different countries of the world and especially in the developing nations? I cannot do better than quote my friend, Dr. Philip H. Coombs:

> There is little doubt that the wide and strong momentum that non-formal education has generated in recent years will continue to build and not turn out to be another passing fad. Yet, there is still the serious danger that external and domestic agencies – anxious for all the familiar reasons to make an impressive record and to show quick results – will stimulate unrealistic expectations in this case. They will plunge too rapidly into action before adequately planning where they are going or sizing up the pitfalls as well as the opportunities along the way. Even with careful diagnosis and planning there are bound to be some misfires, but these are likely to be fewer and less than many that have gone before. It would be my guess that the success rate curve will climb steadily with the build-up of experience and confidence and with the development of better planning, management, and evaluation techniques.
>
> I would hazard the further prediction that as non-formal education pioneers new paths and demonstrates its potential for helping (in conjunction with non-educational measures) to lift disenfranchised people out of the hopelessness of extreme poverty and to accelerate development all across the spectrum of sectors and goals, it will not only gain in self-confidence and prestige but will provide a major stimulus for change in formal education as well. It will also restore education's flagging reputation as a good investment in development.
>
> I would qualify this seemingly optimistic forecast, though, with strong words of caution. These advances will require long and determined efforts in the best of circumstances; it is no game for the impatient who demand quick and dramatic

results. Progress will occur at different rates in different places: fastest in places where there is strong, progressive political leadership that fires the whole population with a compelling vision of the future that can be earned with hard effort and sacrifice; slowest in places where political leaders talk big but act small, because they fear fundamental change and lack real compassion for the common people. In short, as everyone involved in the highly complex business of social and economic change and development should have learned by now, we must be realistically patient and expect no miracles.[4]

As an old man living on borrowed time, I do hope that, on this occasion at least, we give a better account of ourselves than we have generally done in the past, although I may not be there to see it and celebrate.

[4]Philip H. Coombs, "Non-Formal Education: Myths, Realities and Opportunities", *Comparative Education Review*, **20** (3), October 1976.

APPENDIX 1

POLITICAL CONTENT OF EDUCATION*

I am very grateful to the Academy of Political and Social Studies and particularly to its Chairman, Shri R.K. Khadilkar, for inviting me to deliver the key-note address to this opportune Seminar on the important but neglected subject of the political content of education. This is an honour which I hardly deserve but of which I shall ever feel proud. I have, therefore, accepted the invitation in all humility, not because I felt that I could make any worthwhile contribution to the subject, but because I was sure to gain a good deal through your deliberations. I am also happy to find that my task as an opening speaker is comparatively easy. I have only to raise a few relevant questions about the theme of the Seminar and then lean back to absorb the solutions as they gradually emerge in the course of the stimulating debate we are all anticipating.

The major theme of this Seminar is to discuss what the political content of the curricula at the different stages of the education system should be if appropriate political education is to be provided to the people on an adequate scale. But this problem can be discussed only against the background of related wider issues such as the role of education in bringing about the needed social transformation in the country, the kind of political education we should have to achieve our social and economic objectives, the role of the education system in providing this education, the nature and extent of the political education which our educational system has provided in the past or is providing at present, the factors which hinder the development of appropriate political education on an adequate scale, and the measures that have to be taken to improve the present admittedly

*Key-Note Address, delivered by the author at the Seminar organized by the Academy of Political and Social Studies, Poona, 27-28 March, 1976.

unsatisfactory situation. I propose to discuss briefly a few of these important problems.

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

The political system always dominates the entire social scene; and hence those who wield political power are generally able to control all the different social sub-systems and manipulate them to their own advantage. The social groups in power, therefore, have always manipulated the education systems, especially when these happen to depend upon the State for their very existence, to strengthen and perpetuate their own privileged position. But herein lies a contradiction. For the very realization of their selfish ends, the social groups in power are compelled to extend the benefits of these educational systems to the under-privileged groups also. The inevitable task is generally performed with three precautions abundantly taken care of: (1) the privileged groups continue to be the principal beneficiaries of the educational system, dominate the higher stages of education or the hard core of prestigious and quality institutions or the most useful of courses, so as to safeguard their dominant position of leadership in all walks of life; (2) the system is so operated that underprivileged groups can utilize it only marginally in real terms and the bulk of them become either drop-outs or push-outs and get reconciled to their own inferior status in society; and (3) the few from the weaker sections that survive and succeed in spite of all the handicaps are generally coopted within the system to prevent dissatisfaction. But education is essentially a liberating force so that, as time passes, some underprivileged groups do manage to become aware of the reality, the number of the educated persons soon become too large to be fully coopted, and many able individuals among them strive to organize and liberate the weak and the underprivileged. The resultant awareness of the people, combined with suitable organization, necessarily leads to adjustments in the social structure and to an increase in vertical mobility so that new groups begin to share power. Eventually, other social changes also follow and the traditional, inegalitarian, and hierarchical social structure tends to be replaced by another which is more modern, less hierarchical, and more egalitarian. The educational system, therefore, is never politically neutral, and it always

performs three functions simultaneously, viz., it helps the privileged to *dominate*, *domesticates* the underprivileged to their own status in society, and also tends to *liberate* the oppressed. Which of these functions shall dominate and to what extent, depends mostly on one crucial factor, viz., the quality and quantity of the political education which the system provides or upon its 'political content'.

The developments in Indian society, polity, and education during the past 175 years should be viewed against the background of this broad philosophy. From very ancient times, the Indian society has always been elitist and power, wealth, and education were mostly confined to the three *dvija* castes of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas. The vast bulk of the people consisted of the Shudras (who were poor, weak, and mostly illiterate) and of the Antyajas and the tribes (who lived on the social fringe and whose lot was even worse). What is important to note is that the system has an infinite capacity to adjust or to absorb and, for that very reason, it is extremely resistant to any radical transformation. In spite of all the vicissitudes of 2,500 years of history, therefore, the social system continued to exist almost unchanged till the opening of the nineteenth century when the British administrators began to lay the foundation of the modern system of education.

The main objective of the British was to educate a class of persons who would act as the interpreters between them and the ruled. Consequently, the education system they created was essentially meant for the ruling classes who utilized it to modernize themselves and to strengthen and perpetuate their own position. It hardly reached the masses. Even in 1947, only one child out of three in the age-group 6-11 and only one out of every eleven in the age-group 11-14 went to school and the percentage of literacy was only about 14. But to the extent education did reach the masses, it mainly domesticated them to accept the existing social order. It no doubt had a liberating role as well, especially when it tried to introduce Indians to Western literature, science and technology or to spread Western concepts of individualism, democracy, and liberalism or to spread education among the poor people, scheduled castes, and tribes or girls or to increase vertical mobility. But these liberalizing forces were the least developed and indirect. Essentially, it was a system that helped

domination and domestication rather than liberation.

What was the political education that this system provided? It tried mainly to preach the superiority of England over India in almost every field and to inculcate a loyalty to the Crown. When, in spite of these attempts, some sentiments of nationalism began to grow among the students and teachers, it designated them as 'indiscipline' and tried to suppress them. In the social field, the main policy of government was that of neutrality. It was because of this weak political content or the failure to conscientise the people that the education system helped to preserve the status quo rather than to promote rapid egalitarian change. This is the main reason why Mahatma Gandhi advised students to leave schools and colleges if they wanted to serve the country and established independent institutions outside the formal educational system to give national education and to train freedom-fighters.

It must be pointed out, however, that in spite of this failure of the educational system, the Indian people did manage to get a political education which, in the long run, helped them to win freedom. This happened outside the school system, in the freedom struggle which Gandhiji organized. Here the people participated in millions and got political education through personal involvement, a case of 'learning by doing'. Gandhiji was, therefore, the best exponent of non-formal education the country has ever had and India after Gandhiji was vastly different from the India before him. It was the 'political literacy' he spread among even the people that enabled us to become a sovereign democratic republic.

What has happened in the post-independence period? Under the British rule, the Congress leaders argued that political education was an important part of education and refused to accept the official view that education and politics should not be mixed with one another. But when they came to power in 1947, they almost adopted the British policy and began to talk of education being defiled by politics. 'Hands off education' was the call to political parties. But in spite of it, political infiltration into the educational system has greatly increased in the sense that different political parties vie with each other to capture the minds of teachers and students. As has been wittily observed, the politicians not only fished in the troubled waters of education, but actually troubled the educational scene in order that they may be able to

fish. The wise academicians wanted political support without political interference. What we have actually received is infinite political interference with little or no genuine political support. It is also obvious that this interference with the educational system by political parties for their own ulterior motives is no political education at all; and with the all-round growth of elitism, it is hardly a matter for suprise that real political education within the school system (which really means the creation of a commitment to social transformation) has been made even weaker than in the pre-independence period.

At the same time, the freedom struggle came to an end and the major non-formal agency of political education disappeared. The press could and did provide some political education. But it also committed several errors and did not utilize the opportunity to the full, especially as the Indian language papers did not grow adequately and the stranglehold of vested interests continued to dominate. Now even the capacity of the press to provide appropriate political education has been reduced considerably. The same can be said of political parties as well as of other institutions and agencies outside the school system which can be expected to provide political education. All things considered, it appears that we have made no progress in genuine political education in the post-independence period and have even slided back in some respects. For instance, the education system has become even more elite-oriented. The masses get precious little out of it – about sixty per cent of the people are still illiterate. Patriotism has become the first casualty. Gandhiji gave us the courage to oppose government when it was wrong, in a disciplined fashion and on basic principles (he believed the means to be as important as the ends) and taught us to work among the poor people for mobilizing and organizing them. Today, we have lost genuine touch with the people in our over-emphasis on electioneering, mass mobilization has disappeared, and we have even lost the courage to fight on basic issues in a disciplined manner because agitational and anarchic politics for individual, group, or party aggrandisement has become common. The education system of today, therefore, continues to support, as in the pre-independence days, domination of the privileged groups and domestication or coopting of the under-privileged ones and does not support liberating forces to the required extent. This situation will not

change unless we take vigorous steps to provide genuine political education on an adequate scale. This is one of the major educational reforms we need; and if it is not carried out, mere linear expansion of the existing system of formal education will only support the status quo and hamper radical social transformation.

POLITICAL EDUCATION

This leads me to the second problem, viz., what is genuine political education and what are its objectives, content, methods, and agencies? I shall deal with these problems seriatim.

(1) *Definition:* What is political education?* Since the socio-economic objectives of a country are to be realized through the informed, responsible, and sustained political action of all citizens, political education may be defined as the preparation of a citizen to take well-informed, responsible, and sustained action for participation in the national struggle for the realization of the socio-economic objectives of the country. As I said earlier, the over-riding socio-economic objectives in India are the abolition of poverty (in the sense that a minimum essential standard of living is assured to every individual) and the creation of a modern, democratic, secular, and socialist society in place of the present traditional, feudal, hierarchical, and inegalitarian one.

(2) *Objectives and Content:* All education is essentially a three-fold process of

- imparting essential information;
- building up needed skills to react to or solve problems that arise in day-to-day situations in real life by using the knowledge acquired; and
- cultivating the needed interests, attitudes, and values.

This applies to political education as well; and the content of political education will, therefore, consist of *knowledge*, *skills*, and *values* which every citizen must have in order to enable him

*I am not in favour of using the expression 'education for citizenship' for two reasons: It is an expression that has arisen in developed nations and is not quite suited to the conditions of the developing countries; and it often means education for conformity rather than for liberation.

to become an intelligent, effective, and responsible participant in the national struggle for social transformation. It may also be pointed out that all these three elements are significant and have to be developed together, each conditioning the other. Mere knowledge does not serve the objectives of political education which requires effective participation based on appropriate skills. Similarly, unreflective or ill-informed participation is equally undesirable; and neither knowledge nor participation will lead to the realization of the socio-economic objectives unless they are both governed by a proper value system.

(a) *Knowledge:* Political education needs a knowledge of the following :

- the existing society; its historical growth; its value system – social, economic, cultural; educational and political structures; division of power; and the main strengths and weaknesses of the society;
- the new society that the nation desires to create; its value system; the processes and stages of this social transformation and the type of socio-political forces that will support it; the role of individuals and social groups or institutions in creating the new society;
- the existing government of the country (machinery, processes, force); its strengths and weaknesses; alternative forms of government with their strengths and weaknesses; the value systems underlying different forms of government;
- the basic problems facing the country in different walks of life;
- the developmental plans of the country; alternative methods of development and their strengths and weaknesses.

Since knowledge of facts mentioned above is continually changing (as the facts themselves are), a programme of political education cannot rest content with the imparting of such knowledge as a once-and-for-all affair. On the other hand, it must build up such self-study skills as will enable each individual to get all the needed information on his own and to keep himself uptodate through his own personal efforts. This of course necessarily implies that the society does function on an 'open' basis wherein every individual has access to all the relevant facts.

(b) *Skills:* The essence of political education is participation or action. A citizen must be not only politically intelligent, but also politically effective, i.e., he must be able to assist the political system to function properly, to correct aberrations therein as well as to devise strategies for influencing and achieving the desired socio-economic changes. This will need the development of several skills among which the following may be mentioned:

- Skills of understanding and evaluation, e.g., understanding of the current political situation in different fields or at different levels, ability to understand the consequences of one's action and viewpoints as well as of the actions and viewpoints of others; development of notions of policy and the ability to evaluate policy objectives, instruments, and implementation; ability to develop and use political concepts;
- Skills of problem solving, i.e., evaluating a given political situation and deciding upon the measures needed to deal with at the individual, group, or community level;
- Skills of working in groups, of appreciating and respecting views of others, of limiting one's disapproval to argument rather than take it to abuse or blows;
- Ability to understand conflicts of all kinds that arise (e.g., conflicts between different groups, different programmes, different values, etc.) and to develop proper reactions to them; and
- Ability to express himself adequately on political matters so as to ensure effective communication which is so essential to participation.

(c) *Values:* Every social and political system is based upon its own unique frame of values. Some of these are fundamental and absolute, for instance, dignity and autonomy of the individual, equality or social justice. The open democratic systems emphasize the values of freedom, tolerance, fairness, respect for truth, and emphasis on reasoning. The significance of self-awareness, self-criticism and a certain scepticism towards everything, and especially all things dogmatic or fanatical, is obvious.

One important point has to be noted. Every person does not need to acquire the needed knowledge, skills, and values at the same level; and the level of attainment in this regard may vary from stage to stage of education (e.g., a student should rise to successively higher levels at primary, secondary, and university stages) and even at the same stage, it may vary from one group of students to another (e.g., a student of political science at the university stage would be at a different level from, say, a student of animal psychology or chemistry at the same stage). This presents a challenge to the educator, the sociologist, the psychologist, and the political scientist to sit together and frame appropriate curricula for each stage of education, suited to the age and maturity of students at that stage.

(3) *Methods:* Education is imparted in three ways: incidental, non-formal, and formal. By 'incidental' education we mean the learning that takes place automatically as a concomitant of living itself (e.g., the first learning of language by a child in family). By 'non-formal' education we mean the organized education that takes place in the society outside the school system (e.g., education through mass media, through participation in mass movements, etc). Formal education is that which one receives by attending the formal school system.

Political education also is, therefore, imparted in all the three ways – incidental, non-formal, and formal.

(a) *Incidental:* Politics is like oxygen: it is present everywhere in the social atmosphere and every citizen is breathing it or receiving a type of political education all the time through such events as the speeches and actions of political leaders, the behaviour of political parties, the behaviour of different social groups and their reactions to particular situations, etc. Children and youth are particularly susceptible to learn from the adults they come in contact with, to imitate their skills and behaviour, and to absorb their value systems. The children and youth in a traditional, inegalitarian, feudal, and hierarchical society like ours do, therefore, absorb the value system of the society incidentally, in the very process of growing up in the society; and unless effective counteraction is taken through non-formal and formal methods to re-educate them on proper lines, the incidental methods tend to give the wrong type of political education which supports the status quo rather than social transformation. Hence the importance, in our society, of developing formal and non-formal methods of political education.

(b) *Formal:* Political education has to be provided as an integral part of the formal system of education at all stages. But here we have several problems:

- At present, political education is equated with civics or education in citizenship at the school stage. This is a colourless and ineffective combination of a study of the Constitution and Five Year Plans and does not even provide the needed information content. The building up of skills and especially the cultivation of values is totally neglected. The methods of teaching are often based on rote memorization and the element of 'doing' introduced is sometimes grotesque (e.g., election of ministers and a cabinet in primary school parliaments). The quality of the political education provided is, therefore, very poor.
- Even quantitatively, the problem is no better. At the elementary stage, we have not been able to provide universal education. Even at the secondary and university stages, the total enrolment is only about 10 per cent of. the age-group 15-25, and of these, only a few study the subject which is not compulsory for all.
- There is little interest in and sustained work on the problem. We have no high level teams working on the problems anywhere. No good teaching materials are available. The teachers have no orientation. There is hardly any research and we do not even know how the system is actually faring in practice.

Even in the formal system of education, therefore, we have huge tasks to be attempted.

(c) *Non-Formal:* It must be remembered, however, that political education can make the best headway through non-formal channels. Political education is needed most by the poor and the underprivileged and they are not reached by the formal education system. Political education can be most effective among the youth in the age-group 15-25 and among adults, but these can also be reached mostly through non-formal education. These programmes do not just exist at present. However, the best method of providing political education (e.g., learning by doing) is the involvement of children, youth and adults in programmes of development

and organizing the underprivileged masses for improving their life. But this task has been almost totally ignored by all. It is these non-formal techniques that will have to receive priority attention.

(4) *The Outcomes:* So far I have discussed only the inputs into political education: incidental. formal, or non-formal. But this is hardly enough. I will, therefore, say a few words about the outcome of political education or the concrete results which we should expect from it.

Our first objective should be to provide a basic minimum of political education to all individuals so as to make them intelligent, effective, and responsible citizens. This may be called *political literacy* and this should be attempted at the elementary stage. By definition, it should include all such knowledge, skills, and attitudes which every individual must have. For instance, a politically literate person must know what the main issues in contemporary politics are and must know how to set about informing himself further about them. He will then know what the main political disputes are about, what beliefs the main contestants have of them, how they affect him, and what he can or should do about them. But political literacy is not just knowledge or a theoretical analysis. Even more importantly, it is action based on right skills and values. That is why political literacy is even more difficult to attain than ordinary literacy. As can be easily imagined, the extent of political illiteracy amongst us is horrifyingly large.

The knowledge, skills, and attitudes which the leadership at various levels need is certainly much higher than political literacy. This complexity of problems to be tackled at various levels (e.g., local community, district, state, or centre) or in different walks of life such as agriculture, industry, or the services shows immense variety and, consequently, the leadership at all these levels and in all such fields will need different levels of competence in political education. Our programmes of political education must make the provision for this at the secondary and university stages, through non-formal education of out-of-school youth and adults.

Another way of looking at the same problem may be to say that political education should produce persons who will be able to function at the following three levels of political action:

(a) the purely and properly conserving level (e.g., knowing how our present system of government works and knowing the beliefs that are regarded as parts of it);
(b) the liberal or participatory level of the development of knowledge, skills, and values necessary for active citizenship; and
(c) the highest level where one strives to change the direction of government or to promote basically alternative systems at great personal risk or even at the cost of one's life. This is almost equivalent to the concept of *satyagraha* which Mahatma Gandhi put forward.

Political education has its own theoretical part which can be taught in a class-room or through other channels of formal instruction. But as it is essentially an action programme, it will have to be learnt through the method of 'learning by doing'. Organizations like Students' Unions and Teachers' Organizations have to be promoted and worked properly within the educational system for the purpose of providing political education of the right type through participatory action. But perhaps the most important method of good political education would be to develop a nation-wide programme of mass mobilization and involvement in developmental programmes. This, as I said earlier, would be the counterpart of the struggle for political freedom which was waged in the pre-independence days.

(5) *Agencies:* What are the agencies that will provide political education? Within education itself, the formal school system is a minor agency of political education and, as I have stressed earlier, the non-formal system which covers the out-of-school youth in the age-group 15-25 and adults is a far more powerful and effective agency. It should not be forgotton, however, that the educational system, formal or non-formal, is still only one of the agencies of political education and perhaps a minor one. There are several other social agencies which have to play their role in the programmes just as they have to play a corresponding role in programmes of other education as well. Political education must be promoted by press, the mass media like radio and television, by instruments of government at different levels such as the local bodies, the State Government and the Central Government and the political parties (and especially the left-oriented parties).

A PROGRAMME OF ACTION

Friends, I have already taken too much of your time. Before concluding, however, I will refer briefly to the second theme of this Seminar, viz., preparing an outline of programme of action which the Academy of Political and Social Studies, Poona, should develop over a period of three to five years, collaborating with other agencies interested in the field. In my opinion, this programme should consist of research, publications, experimentation, training of teachers and student leaders, and organizing campaigns to educate public opinion. The ultimate objectives of the programme should be three: (1) to influence the policies of government and the official system of education so that a programme of appropriate political education is included within it on an adequate scale; (2) to develop valuable insights and understanding of the programmes and their different aspects; (3) and to train a large number of inter-disciplinary personnel for dealing with problems of political education. I do hope that the Seminar will find adequate time to deal with all these four important issues.

I congratulate the Academy of Political and Social Studies, Poona, for having initiated this programme of studies relating to the relationship between education, society, and politics. It is only the basic studies into this relationship that will enable us to develop programmes of social transformation and political action.

I hope that the Academy will make every effort to elicit co-operation and collaboration of other agencies for the development of this crucial programme, and I hope that its efforts will be crowned with success.

APPENDIX II

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR THE PRE-SCHOOL CHILD

The programmes of formal education for the pre-school child (age group 3-5) are well known. They presume a regular institution with a building, considerable equipment, and a trained full-time teacher (generally a matriculate with specialized professional training of one year or more). Naturally, the costs of the programme go up and pre-school education becomes even costlier than primary education. We now provide formal pre-school education to only about two per cent of the children in the age-group. The bulk of the children in pre-schools also belong to the urban, middle class, and well-to-do families. At the present level of cost, we cannot afford to extend it much further, even to a five per cent level. As trained and educated women teachers are unwilling to go to villages, the extension of formal pre-school education to rural areas becomes extremely difficult.

Non-formal education programmes can, however, be of immense use in extending pre-school education to out-of-school children in urban and rural areas. Some of the experiments that are being tried out from this point of view have been discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

(1) *Children's Play Centres:* The idea of these centres is that young children are brought together for about 1½ hours per day to participate in a programme of play, song, dance, story-talking, and other related informal activities. Some of these centres are run in association with primary schools by primary teachers themselves who are spared for this work or are given a small allowance. Quite a few centres are also run by non-teachers, usually local women selected and trained for the purpose.

(2) *The Tamil Nadu Experiment:* In Tamil Nadu, a bold and imaginative experiment is being tried out. Here local women with some education are given a short intensive training and placed in charge of non-formal pre-schools or *Balawadis*. They receive a

small allowance for their work and there is provision for close supervision and guidance. The costs of the programme are low and it is possible to expand it considerably even within the resources available.

(3) *Anganwadis:* This experiment is being tried in Maharashtra. The programme includes nutrition, health services, and non-formal education. It is being conducted by selected local women (almost all being non-teachers) who are paid small allowances and are given short orientations for their work.

(4) *Mobile Day-Care Centres:* The mobile day-care centres of New Delhi form another interesting experiment of non-formal education. The programme covers three main groups of children: 0-3, 3-6, and 6-10. There is no watertight division, and older children often sit with the younger ones and look after them. The programme includes non-formal education with considerable elasticity and adjustment to the needs and interests of the children. It is conducted mostly by workers selected from the community under the supervision of a regular teacher in-charge.

(5) *Creches and Pre-Schools Attached to Primary Schools:* Many children, mostly girls, have to look after the young kids at home and are unable to attend schools. In order to help them to learn, some primary schools run creches and pre-schools attached to them. All that the school provides is some accommodation and equipment. The creches and pre-schools are run by the older boys and girls who take turns and are guided by the teachers and who also manage to pursue their own studies.

There are several other experiments of this type. For instance, a Social Welfare Organization in Gujarat runs peripatetic teams of pre-school teachers who visit a village, run a Balawadi for two months, train some local women for the work, place them in charge, and then move on to another village. There are also great possibilities of developing non-formal programmes of pre-school education through the voluntary and cooperative efforts of the women themselves, although these are but little explored at present. But even without trying to be comprehensive in this narration, one can see the immense possibilities for the development of innovative forms of non-formal pre-school education.

APPENDIX III

THE FUNCTIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

The object of this paper is to examine how and why the primary school in India has become dysfunctional and to show how it can be made functional again to serve the cause of mass education.

THE BIRTH OF A MODEL

The primary school in India was designed, about 150 years ago, for a certain social situation and on certain assumptions which were valid in that situation. For instance:

- it was assumed (this was then perfectly true) that there was no adult resident in the community who could teach the proposed new curriculum of the school (i.e., the three R's, history, geography, science, etc.), and that it was, therefore, necessary to entrust the task exclusively to a trained professional teacher who would be a full-time paid public servant.
- Like the teacher, the student also was expected to be full-time and learning for five to six hours a day in the schools (with extra doses of homework) because there was so much to be learnt and the sooner and more thoroughly it was learnt, the better it would be for the child.
- As there was no concept of universal and compulsory education at that time, it was assumed that the parents would appreciate the value of the school for the future well-being of their child and that they would gladly feed, equip, and send him to school on a full-time basis. In fact, there was also a further assumption that the home would not make any demands on the child's time for its own purposes, and that it would also give him such additional support as the school would demand.
- It was further assumed that the curriculum of the school, which had been prepared by the government after considering what an average Indian ought to know to make him like an average Englishman, would necessarily be of interest to every child and would be meaningfully related to his own environment.

In short, the primary school began in urban areas, mainly for the children of the well-to-do upper and middle classes who were themselves educated and had appreciated the value of education, and who could feed, clothe, equip, and send their children to school on a whole-time basis. There was no concept of either universal education or compulsory schooling; and the objective of education was not so much to educate an Indian child to his own environment, as to convert him into an English child, except for race, blood, and colour.

THE MODEL RUNS INTO TROUBLE

There was of course nothing basically wrong in the original model of the primary school. In the circumstances of the period it could not have begun otherwise. It must also be admitted that the model did serve a useful purpose for several years; and nothing went wrong with the school so long as it was basically meant to be an institution for the urban well-to-do families. Even when the primary school entered the rural areas, no problems arose so long as it was run on a voluntary basis, and mostly for the well-to-do families.

Trouble, however, started when ideas of mass education or of compulsory primary schooling began to gather momentum about fifty years ago and the same institution of the primary school, designed 100 years earlier in an entirely different context, was extended to programmes of mass education, without any change in its structure, organization, or content. As can be easily realized, this unimaginative decision started a host of troubles.

- Large numbers of parents who were illiterate, and who probably had no literate ancestors for several generations, did not see any purpose in the school and refused to send their children to it. Thus, for the first time, we became conscious of the problem of non-attendance, although it had always

been there.

- Some others saw the school in a different light, as a place where children were taken care of for most of the day without any cost to the family, and therefore began to send their children to school when they were very young (say, six to eight years of age) and who were otherwise merely nuisances at home. But the same parents withdrew them from schools as soon as the children became old enough to work in or outside the family because the family finances needed such help. The school was thus converted into a free baby-sitting establishment and this created the intractable prolem of drop-outs which has since assumed grave proportions in every developing society.
- Like the parents, even the children from the poor rural families showed reactions to this model which were very different from those of the children from the urban upper or middle class families for whom it had been basically created. The young rural children from peasant families who now entered school found that their best assets were devalued : they could run, milk a cow, ride on a buffalo, climb a tree in a jiffy like a cat, recognize every tree in the neighbourhood, or call by name almost all kinds of birds, and so on, but these accomplishments had no respectability in the school and were even unwanted. On the other hand, the things they could not do (and saw little sense in) such as being able to speak the standard language with the correct accent, or learning about the shape of the earth, became major objectives of the school and placed them at a tremendous disadvantage vis-a-vis their compeers from the middle and upper class families. Thus began lags in learning, absenteeism, stagnation, and the other well-known ills, which arose from the one basic fact that the curriculum of the school was really 'inert' to the children of the poorer classes and did not stimulate or interest them adequately.

In short, the primary school of the 1850s which was a very functional institution within the framework of educating the children of the well-to-do classes in urban areas became, in the 1950s, a very dysfunctional institution because it was transplanted, without any change in its organization, structure, or

content, to work for the education of the poor masses in rural areas who lived below the poverty line. It is this dysfunctional primary school that has been the biggest problem in the lap of the developing countries ever since they accepted the goal of universal primary education. All of us and Unesco are trying to remove these dysfunctionalities of the primary school and several learned remedies, sanctioned by the prestige of 'research' and hallowed by the approval of 'experts' and high-level 'international, seminars', have been proposed and tried; but if factual reports are to be believed, they have produced little tangible effect on the miserable situation. The million dollar question before us is: How can we make the primary school functional once again?

TWO SOLUTIONS

It appears that the answers to this question fall broadly into two categories depending upon the diagnosis and the ideological position of the educationist concerned.

The first group of educationists hold that the model is right and that it need not, and should not, be changed. The solutions it offers to the problems into which the school has run are, therefore, somewhat on the lines given below:

- Why does not the State abolish poverty? If every parent is well-to-do and able to feed, clothe, equip, and send his child to school on a whole-time basis (and there is no reason why this should be impossible to achieve), the model will work perfectly without any change.
- If poverty cannot be abolished, why should not the State develop a programme of incentives? If the parent cannot equip the child, give free educational supplies. If he cannot clothe his children, give free uniforms. If he cannot feed them, provide school lunches. If he cannot afford to forego the earnings (or help) of his child, however meagre, give a compensatory allowance to the family to neutralize the opportunity cost of educating the child; and so on.
- Why not devise special coaching programmes for these children from the poor rural families who do not find the curriculum (designed for the upper or middle class children)

sufficiently relevant or interesting? All this talk of adjusting the rural school curriculum to the local environment is nonsense. We are a democracy and we insist that the rural children shall learn the same curriculum as that prescribed for urban boys. If they do not learn it as well in school time, provide special tuition.

The second group of educationists are those who start by asserting that the model is wrong and that we should create an alternative model or models which are equivalent (in the sense that they achieve the same educational results) but are not necessarily identical (in the sense that they insist on uniform curricula for all sorts of conditions) to suit our own needs and conditions. The simple assumption of this group is that models are made and unmade for people and not vice versa. Because of this fundamental difference, the solutions offered by this group of thinkers are also different. For instance:

- They argue that the abolition of poverty is desirable and should be vigorously attempted. But this is essentially a long-term affair and we cannot wait to universalize education until poverty is abolished. In fact, universalization of primary education itself may well be an important means of abolishing poverty. It is, therefore, our duty to design a new model which we must, at any rate, use between now and the day when poverty is abolished.
- All this talk of incentives is often placed in the wrong perspective. Provision of free educational equipment on the school premises is important and should be undertaken. Fortunately, this is not a costly programme and can be immediately adopted. But free supplies of clothing and school meals are a different issue. These are very costly and the State will not be able to afford them. Even if it could, they are not educational but welfare programmes and should really be provided to every needy child, whether attending the school or not. It is also not certain that these incentives do lead either to better attendance or better learning (children often come to the school for the meal only). Let us not forget that, in the present financial conditions in India and in the developing countries generally, to make universal primary education dependent upon the large-scale provision of incentives is to write off universalization for years to come.
- Universalization of primary education does not mean the universalization of middle class values and lifestyles. That would be disastrous. For instance, Shri E.W. Aryanayakam used to say that the beautiful handicrafts of India survive and earn valuable foreign exchange because we have failed to make primary education universal and some children at least are left free to learn and practise these handicrafts in their homes. Let us realize that universalization of primary education implies the creation of a new ethic based on work and not the universal diffusion of a white-collar, elitist culture.
- If a child cannot attend school full-time because he works at home, he should not be deprived of all education, and facilities for suitable part-time education should be created for him. Every child must learn, on a full-time basis, if possible, and on a part-time basis, if necessary.

In short, the main argument of this group of thinkers is that the adoption of a new model suited to the needs of the poor rural communities will make it possible to universalize a more effective type of primary education within a short period and within a level of investment which the developing countries can afford at this stage. They, therefore, emphasize a change of the old model of the primary school which has now become dysfunctional and are prepared to consider not one but any number of alternative models which may be found to be necessary and feasible for educating the masses.

I have given up all hope of reconciling the views of these two opposing groups. No amount of argument seems to convince either one or the other (incidentally, I do not find that arguments really convince anybody of anything) and both the groups have continued to exist in India for at least forty years, ever since Shri R.V. Parulekar published h's book *Mass Education in India* (1934) to represent the second point of view. While some hailed him as a great educator and a pioneer thinker, others identified him with the devil himself, and a Director of Public Instruction of those days suggested that Shri Parulekar and his book should be drowned in the Arabian

Sea. Both sides claim virtue for themselves. The first group believes that it is the real champion of the poor who will not compromise on anything but the best, and the second group argues that one has to adopt a realistic and pragmatic approach in such cases, that 'better' cannot be allowed to become an enemy of the 'good', that 'some' education is better than 'none', and that it is in the larger interest of the poor to receive whatever education they can (by changing the model) immediately and continue to fight for still better education (which is really an endless process). It is, therefore, probably a question of one's faith that makes one decide which group one would like to belong to; and this appears to be one of those basically irrational decisions which people always insist on describing as rational.

I do not know, dear reader, to which one of these two groups you belong or wish to belong. I belong to the second (I do not and cannot justify this affiliation just as I do not and cannot justify my colour or sex or height) and hold that the dysfunctional primary school can and should be converted into a functional one by changing the model suitably. If you also belong to the second group, you may find something of interest in what follows. If, on the other hand, you belong to the first group, please skip the pages and pass on to the next article.

THE CHANGES NEEDED

What are the major changes needed in the traditional model of the primary school to make it functional in a situation where primary education is to be universalized at an early date, even while the majority of the people are still poor and, in consequence, the resources available to the State for the development of this programme are also limited? These are briefly indicated below.

The existing primary schools may be regarded as a single-point entry, sequential, and full-time system of institutional instruction by full-time and professional teachers which tends to be rigid and inert to the bulk of the children from poor families. It is necessary to analyse each of the attributes in some detail.

SINGLE-POINT ENTRY

Ordinarily, a child is expected to enter the elementary system at about the age of six (or even five in some States) in Grade I. It is true that children below or above this prescribed age of first admission are also allowed to join Grade I. It is also true that children who have studied privately may be examined and allowed to join, according to their abilities, in a grade higher than the first. But such admission to under-age or over-age children in Grade I (or in grades other than first) are exceptions rather than the rule: and it would be correct to say that, for the average child, especially in the rural areas, there is only one age of entry, namely, six or five, and only one grade in which fresh admission can be given, namely, Grade I.

This system has two obvious advantages: (1) it tends to create a homogeneous age-group cohort in Grade I which tends to rise, year after year, to successively higher grades; and (2) it makes class-room instruction comparatively easy for the teacher. But it has its disadvantages also. For instance, what happens to a rural child who does not get into Grade I at about the age of six? In practice, this child can never get into school again and will have to live and die as an illiterate adult. All that we can say to this child is, "Sorry, my boy. You have unfortunately missed the bus. But when you grow up, get married and have a child, bring him along when he is six and we shall be happy to admit him in Grade I". If, by some misfortune, his child also were to miss admission in Grade I at about the age of six, we are prepared to wait patiently for the grand-child. It is this approach of providing a single-point entry to the entire educational system that makes it so ineffective in practice.

What happens to a child who desires to learn at a little later age, say, 11 or 14? It is true that such a child can be, and is also, admitted to primary schools. But the admission is made invariably in Grade I and this grown-up child is required to sit along with other very young children, learn the same lessons, and at the same speed. This is usually very boring to this grown-up child who, more often than not, runs away from the school and becomes a 'drop-out'. What such a child needs is

specially organized classes where education is imparted through special techniques suited to his maturity. But there is no provision in our system for this purpose.

It is obvious that our educational system would gain infinitely if it were to provide, not a single-point entry at about the age of six, but multiple-point entries at different ages, say, 9, 11, or even 14. The desire to learn may spring up in the minds of children at any of these later ages; and our system should be elastic enough to admit them into schools which are specially organized and where instruction is imparted on lines which are appropriate to their needs and capacities. Such alternative channels of admission would bring into the school system large numbers of children who now remain out and add merely to the numbers of illiterate adults. It is also obvious that such a system would be far more effective from the point of view of the spread of literacy among the masses than the present model of a single-point entry in Grade I at about the age of six.

SEQUENTIAL CHARACTER

The existing schools are also a sequential system in the sense that a child is expected to complete one class every year and to rise to the next higher class after passing the annual examination. There are, of course, large exceptions. Many children fail to pass the examination at the end of the year and are, therefore, detained in the same class as repeaters. The extent of this evil, generally known as stagnation, is very large in our system at present. On the other hand, a few children may complete two classes in a year and be given a 'double' promotion. But such cases are extremely rare. By and large, therefore, the system functions in a sequential manner and children rise every year from class to class.

The primary objective of this system again is to facilitate class-room instruction by grouping children of similar attainments together. This purpose is admirably served, no doubt. On the other hand, it does not meet the needs of children who begin late. For instance, it has been shown through practical experimentation that grown-up children of 11 or 14 years of age are able to complete the studies of Grade I-V in about two years. Very often, grown-up children of 14 to 18 years of

age are able to complete the course prescribed for Grades I-VIII in a period of 2-3 years and pass the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination creditably. Programmes of this type are obviously very useful and suitable for conditions of a developing country such as ours. But they have never been developed, except in a few experimental projects conducted by well-meaning and forward-looking educationists.

FULL-TIME INSTRUCTION

Another important aspect of the existing schools is that they provide only full-time institutional instruction. As pointed out earlier, this does not create any problem for the well-to-do classes for whose children the system was basically devised. But it is extremely antagonistic to the interests of the masses who are so poor that their children are compelled to work at home or outside and to add to the meagre family budget. Every boy is generally required to work as soon as he grows up and becomes about nine years old: he works on the family farm, tends cattle, or goes out to earn some wages in whatever way possible. A girl is required to assist her over-burdened mother to look after the young children who keep continually coming in. It is impossible for these children to attend school on a whole-time basis; and that is why they either never go to school or generally drop out, sooner rather than later. These hard economic factors are the principal reasons for the large wastage which now afflicts primary education and accounts for about two-thirds of it or even more.

This wastage can be overcome by a variety of ways. For instance, the standards of living of the common people may be so raised that they can send their children to full-time institutions. The society may provide cash grants to the parents of such children to compensate them for their foregone earnings and then compel them to send their children to schools. Alternatively, a system or part-time education can be organized so that all such children, who are required to work in or for their families, may be able to earn as well as to learn. It is obvious that the first of the methods, however laudable, can only be a long-term solution. The second is financially beyond the reach of the government at this time and for years to come. The only

practicable alternative, therefore, is the third, namely, to organize a large-scale programme of part-time education for working children. Today, our motto is that either the child attends school on a full-time basis or is compelled to drop out. This heartless system (heartless to the poor man's child) has no place in a country such as ours where the vast bulk of the people are poor. It should be replaced by another in which every child is required to attend school on a full-time basis, if possible, and on a part-time basis, if necessary. The hours of part-time instruction in such a system can also be organized in a manner that would suit the working conditions of the children and enable them to educate themselves without interfering with the essential work which they must put in for their families.

EXCLUSIVE ORGANIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS

Yet another aspect of the existing schools is that they utilize exclusively the service of full-time professional teachers. This is done in the name of standards and no one would quarrel with the attempt to utilize full-time professional teachers. However, exclusive dependence on this pattern creates several problems. The first is a continuing increase in costs because the inescapable consequence of such professionalization is a rise in the salaries of teachers (which increases cost per teacher unit) and a continuous reduction in the teacher-pupil ratio (which increases cost per pupil). Moreover, the very cause of quality often suffers because of this emphasis. It has been suggested, for instance, that the standards in the primary schools would improve if they utilize local talent and teaching resources, e.g., a local carpenter or a tailor may be used to teach a craft in schools or a good local singer may be utilized for teaching music. It is not necessary that such teachers should necessarily be qualified from the strictly professional point of view and it is also possible to make them good teachers through appropriate programmes of orientation. But such efforts are never made. The costs of primary schools may also go down if pupils themselves are utilized for purposes of teaching. In the traditional indigenous schools in India, for instance, the monitorial system was a common feature under which pupils were paired off and a senior pupil was required to take charge of instructing a junior pupil entrusted

to his care under the general guidance of the teacher. Such a system or its variants can give excellent results, especially in single-teacher schools or in schools where it is not economically feasible to provide one teacher for every class. In several areas, it is also possible to use educated young persons to assist the teachers of local schools in educating the children of the community and pay them small allowances which would be extremely valuable in the local conditions, but which would, nevertheless, reduce the overall costs of education by a substantial extent. But these devices also remain unexplored. What is worse, whenever such proposals for the utilization of non-professional teachers are put forward, the entire organization of the professional teachers rises up in revolt and sees to it that they are neither adopted nor allowed to succeed.

NO RIGID DEMARCATION BETWEEN PRE-SCHOOL AND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Our primary schools have no pre-schools or creches attached to them. The most common work which girls from poor families are required to do is to look after young children. On the one hand, we are anxious to promote girls' education and organize a number of programmes to increase their enrolment. On the other, we do not permit girls to bring young children with them and request them to leave them at home before coming to school. Since this is impossible, the practice means only one thing: the girls are prevented from joining schools and there is a positive disincentive in the system against the spread of education among girls from poor families. Experiments have been tried, notably by the late Smt. Tarabai Modak, wherein small creches or pre-schools were attached to primary schools and were conducted by girls themselves under the general supervision of the teachers. The additional costs involved in the programme were marginal, but they succeeded very well in enrolling a large number of girls from the poorer families. This elasticity of organization is absent in the model that we have developed and, consequently, the development of education of girls from the masses is considerably hampered.

CONTENT

The content of the primary education is at present determined by one main consideration, namely, that it should prepare a child for secondary education. There is also an over-emphasis on the uniformity of curriculum in all primary schools - urban as well as rural. The net result of these trends, as stated earlier, is to make it impossible to relate the curriculum to the local environment. The introduction of a single set of textbooks uniformly in all primary schools or of external examinations at the end of Grade VII or VIII also tends to standardize content and to make variations to suit local conditions almost impossible. It is necessary to give up all such trends to centralize authority in curriculum construction or evaluation and to give freedom to schools to adjust the curriculum to the local environment and to make evaluation depend mostly on internal assessment by the teachers themselves. This will make it possible to have a curriculum for every primary school which stimulates children and attracts the support of the parents. The school will then become an interesting place which parents will appreciate and the children would like to go to; and the major difficulties that arise in the present system from an inert curriculum will be eliminated.

It is thus obvious that the existing model of the primary school favours the well-to-do, whose children complete the primary course successfully (their main objective is secondary or higher education for which they look upon primary education merely as an inevitable stepping stone), and harms the interest of the masses, the bulk of whose children are converted into 'failures' and 'drop-outs'. If primary education is to be made universal, the traditional model of the primary school should be radically modified on the following lines to make due provision for the education of the children of the masses:

(1) The single-point entry system must be replaced by a multiple-point entry system under which it will be open for older children of 9, 11, or 14 to join the schools in separate classes specially organized for their needs.
(2) The sequential character of the system must go; and it should be possible for older children to join the prescribed courses at any time and also to complete them in a much shorter period.
(3) The exclusive emphasis on full-time institutional instruction should be replaced by a large programme of part-time education which should be arranged to suit the convenience of children who are required to work.
(4) The exclusive emphasis on the utilization of full-time professional teachers should go. An attempt should be made to utilize all the teaching resources available in the local community; and the service of part-time local teachers and even of senior students should be fully utilized for promoting instruction in the primary schools.
(5) There should be no rigid demarcation between primary schools and pre-schools. Girls who are required to look after young children should be encouraged to bring the children to the school. These could be taken care of in pre-schools or creches attached to the primary schools, which should be managed by the girls themselves, by turns, under the guidance of teachers. This will provide a valuable service at the minimal additional cost and assist materially in the spread of education among girls from the poorer families.
(6) Rather than try to introduce uniformity in curriculum which leads to rigidity, we should evolve an elastic and dynamic system in which there is considerable freedom of initiative, experimentation, and innovation left to schools and to teachers and make every attempt to relate the curriculum to the local environment and to the needs, interests, and aptitudes of the children so that their learning, learning to do, and aptitudes are developed.

This is essentially the message of non-formal education for improvement of the formal system; and I would urge that these major structural changes in the traditional primary school should be carried out on the basis of highest priority. They alone can make the primary school functional once again and enable us to universalize primary education in the shortest time and at the least possible cost.

THE INTERNATIONAL TREND

Should we introduce these changes in the traditional primary school in the developing countries only because they have limited resources and because they have not yet been able to introduce universal primary education for their children? Or are these changes significant even to the developed countries of the world? It is interesting to know that the latter statement is also true and that this attempt to blend a large non-formal element with the traditional formal school system is the future trend of education in all the countries of the world, developing or developed.

The developed countries of the world have already made primary education universal for their children. Many of them have also made secondary education universal. The objective before most of them now is to create a system of life-long education for all. From the point of view of this objective, they find that the existing educational system which lays an almost exclusive emphasis on formal education will have to be replaced by another in which there is a blend of both formal and non-formal elements. As the Report of the International Commission on Education, *Learning To Be*, observes:

> The concept of education limited in time (to school stage) and confined in space (to school buildings) must be superseded. School education must be regarded not as the end but as the fundamental component of total educational activity, which includes both institutionalized and out-of-school education. A proportion of educational activity should be deformalized and replaced by flexible, diversified models. (p. 233)

The changes in the traditional primary school which are being proposed here for the developing countries in order to help them to make primary education universal in the shortest time and at the minimum of cost are, therefore, exactly similar to those which the developed countries are now trying to introduce with the objective of providing life-long education for all. These changes, therefore, may well be described as the future trend in world education – a trend which will bring the developing and the developed countries much closer together than at any time in the past. This is, therefore, the direction which we should now try to give to our efforts at educational reconstruction.

APPENDIX IV

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION OF THE OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE

Investment in education is necessarily long-term and begins to yield results after a generation and, in some cases, even after a longer period. Developing countries, however, are pressed greatly for time; and hence an important issue is educational programmes which can yield quicker and almost immediate results. If such programmes can be identified and implemented, those developing countries that will get a much better and quicker return for their investment in education will stand most to benefit.

Several programmes of this type can be suggested: adult literacy, on-the-job training of industrial workers, agricultural extension, and so on. But of all these, probably the most significant and far-reaching would be a crash programme for the education of young persons in the age-group 15-25. The size of this group is large, about 25 per cent of the total population. Its members are generally alert, inquisitive, impressionable, and capable of being inspired by emotional commitments to service of the people and the country. As educands, therefore, they offer rich and potential material that is much easier to handle than either children of younger age or adults. What is more important, the cost of an educational programme for them are comparatively less (for such education is necessarily part-time) and its returns immediate and effective because these young persons will become active and influential members of the society in five to ten years.

If society had funds enough to provide only about eight years of universal education for every individual, what would be the period of life in which these funds could be invested? This is one of the most fascinating problems in educational planning. Some suggest the age-group 3-10 and also make out a strong case for it on psychological and physiological considerations. Others

would vote for the age group 6-14, an age-group that our Constitution has also identified for providing free and compulsory education. But there are yet others who would plead for the age-group 14-21, especially in developing countries, on the grounds that the costs of educating this group would be smaller and the results quicker and more effective. It is neither possible nor necessary to arbitrate between these different viewpoints. We as a nation have made our choice and have decided that the main thrust of our educational effort should be with the age-group 6-14. There is no need to alter this decision. But what we must do is supplement it by a large-scale crash programme for the age-group 15-25, which includes the age-group 14-21. It is, therefore, strongly recommended that a massive programme for the education of this age-group should be developed during the seventies. The next three years should be fully utilized for organizing pilot projects on a fairly big scale and for building up the necessary expertize, training of personnel, and production of materials. The programme should then be given a big place in the Fifth Five-Year Plan.

CONTENT AND CHARACTER OF THE PROGRAMME

A small proportion of the young persons aged 15-25 are undergoing full-time education at present at different levels – some at the primary, a majority at the secondary, and some at the university stages. But, taken all in all, the enrolment of this age-group in all categories of educational institutions does not exceed about 10 per cent of their total population. No proposals are made here regarding the education of this small group already enrolled in schools and colleges. The normal programmes of educational reform would take care of their needs. But what we are concerned with most, in this paper, is the development of an educational programme for the out-of-school youth who form the other 90 per cent of the age-group and who are at present without any educational facilities whatsoever. It is for them – and they form about 18 per cent of the total population – that a large - scale educational programme has to be developed on a war footing.

The content and character of this programme will obviously depend upon educational attainments and needs of these young persons. Some of them may have completed secondary education

and a few would even be university graduates. A much larger number would have received some primary education and may be expected to be literate with varying degrees of other educational attainments. But, during the next decade at any rate, a little more than half would be those who have not been to school at all or who left school too early to have attained functional literacy. The programmes to be developed for this group would therefore be at various levels – for a large proportion, at the primary level with an emphasis on functional literacy. But for another much smaller and more significant group, the education required would, in its content, be at the secondary level. A small minority of these may even need education at the university level.

It would, however, be wrong to assume that continuing general education alone would be strong enough to attract and hold these young persons and meet their needs. General education will be a necessary component of the new programme, no doubt. But by itself it would not have the necessary vitality. It must be remembered that most of these out-of-school youth are workers, engaged in some activity that enables them to earn a living or to help their family to make both ends meet. Even though they are technically non-workers, they are sharing full responsibilities of the normal work in their families. The focus of their interest is, therefore, vocational; and what will attract them most is the prospect of improving their present vocational skills so that they can earn a little more, or of learning some new vocational skills that will enable them to improve their economic status. A strong vocational element will, therefore, have to be built into all educational programmes proposed to be developed for this young group.

Given this strong vocational core, it will be possible to build several other educational elements around it that by themselves would not be strong enough to attract and retain these young persons. The first, as stated above, is general education. The second important component would be family life education, including family planning. Most of the persons in this age-group would be married, especially in rural areas, and a programme of family life education will interest them most and would also be extremely beneficial. It is also obvious that it is this group, that is entering the procreative stage of life, that needs to be exposed to education in family planning. Unfortunately, the family planning

worker does not reach them or become effective with them for sheer absence of a continuing channel of communication. The chances of the family planning programme succeeding and becoming effective are therefore the largest if it is operated as a part of a comprehensive educational programme for out-of-school youth.

Two other important educational elements can also be added with advantage. The first is the recreational and cultural interest of youth, and the second is their willingness, or even eagerness, to participate in meaningful programmes of nation-building or social service.

It is thus proposed that what these young persons need is a mix of several educational elements – a mix that will have a strong vocational core round which will be built up other important educational interests, such as continuing general education (including functional literacy, where necessary), family life education (including family planning), promotion of recreational and cultural pursuits, and participation in programmes of social service or national development. The nature of the mix will vary from group to group, and even in the same group, from time to time. The success of the programme will largely depend upon the manner in which its organizers are able to visualize and provide the precise mix that a given group needs at a particular moment.

It must also be pointed out that this will essentially be a programme of part-time education because most of the persons to be educated are employed in one way or another. Those who are unemployed and are able to join on a whole-time basis will have two options: to join any existing educational institution of their choice on a whole-time basis, or to participate in this programme on a part-time basis. But for several reasons, this will only be a part-time programme.

It will be necessary to carry out careful surveys of young persons in a given locality to find out not only what their interests are but also what the times are when they can conveniently receive instruction. The success of the programme will obviously depend as much upon the conformity between the hours of instruction and the leisure time of the youth as upon the 'fit' between its content and their needs and interests.

Part-time class-room instruction would thus be the most important technique. But it should not be the sole technique. It will have to be supplemented, wherever necessary, by correspondence education, education through mass media like the radio and the film, and full-time intensive instruction of comparatively short duration provided in specially arranged residential camps. All these different techniques will have to be mixed appropriately to meet the needs of each group from time to time.

AGENCIES

What are the agencies through which this programme can be developed? It will be a fatal mistake to try to create a new agency for the programme. Such a proposal will be extremely costly and will also take too much time. Our policy should, therefore, be to create only a new organization for the programme, and to utilize for its purposes all the resources both human and material of all existing institutions as well as the educational resources available in the community itself, which often go untapped. This is the only economic and practical method of attacking the problem in a massive way and without much loss of time.

The focal agency that should be harnessed for this programme is the huge infrastructure we have created for the education of children and the young – namely, our primary and middle schools, secondary schools, colleges and universities, and vocational institutions of all categories. We have now about 550,000 primary schools, about 120,000 middle schools, about 50,000 secondary schools, about 4,000 colleges, nearly 100 universities or university-level institutions, and some thousands of vocational institutions for both agriculture and industry. They have among them about 2.5 million teachers, thousands of buildings, and equipment valued in tens of millions of rupees. These are vast resources that must be utilized for this programme on a part-time basis. There is also the special advantage for this programme that most of these out-of-school youth will have been at some time students in these schools. It is therefore suggested that these institutions should be the centres round which the new programme should be built, and that their teachers, equipment, and buildings should be fully utilized. This will not create any conflict between their normal programmes and this new part-time programme. If steps are taken to pay additional remuneration to teachers for

the extra work they will have to do, it will be possible to mount this programme at a minimal cost and in the shortest time.

Important as the role of these educational institutions is in this programme, it is necessary to realize that the cooperation of several other agencies has also to be secured in its proper development. The core of the new programme has to be vocational, and for this the present educational system is not adequately equipped. In addition to the resources that all existing institutions of vocational education can bring to bear, it is necessary to enlist additional support through all other available organizations; for example, the agricultural universities, the Gram Sewak training centres, and the demonstration or seed farms of the agricultural departments can provide valuable resources for education in agriculture. The Industrial Training Institutes can provide a very good base for education in industry. The personnel of the Health Department, institutions of medical education, and the hospitals and dispensaries can add their resources for the development of family life education, including family planning. Several other departments of government can also make their own significant contributions, and it will be necessary to rope all of them into the programme.

Not only this. The large educational resources that the community has, and that generally go untapped, will have to be utilized. For instance, retired teachers can be of great help. The private medical practitioners may have to be involved in courses in family planning. Private industry should also be required to assist and participate. The services of individual craftsmen and other skilled workers who may be managing their own business, could also be requisitioned on a part-time basis. Sportsmen and artists living in the community can be harnessed to provide for recreational and cultural needs. And so on.

It is claimed that in any given area where the programme is to be developed, we will find not only the educational needs of the young but also several institutions and personnel who have skills and services to meet these needs. What is therefore needed is a survey of the educational needs and interests of the young, on the one hand, and of the institutional and human resources available in the community to meet them, on the other. The contribution of the organizer is to bring these two together in a meaningful manner. This, therefore, is essentially a problem not

of a lack of resources but of a lack of the necessary vision and organization. It is these that we have now to emphasize.

In all countries where such programmes have been developed, it is found that the young themselves make very good teachers for the young. It should, therefore, be our policy, right from the start, to develop leaders from among the out-of-school youth who will take increasingly upon themselves the growing responsibilities of this educational programme. This is also the reason why such a programme will provide special opportunities for compulsory national service. If government desires to make national service compulsory for university graduates, the development of this programme can provide the necessary field experience; for on the basis of this alone, a meaningful programme of national service for university students can be developed.

ORGANIZATION

What type of an organization will be needed for the development of this programme and how shall the programme evolve? These are the two important questions that we will have to answer.

It may be desirable to visualize, in the first instance, the organization required at the grassroot level. We may, therefore, take the district as a unit. What is visualized here is that there will be a special officer in charge of this programme for the district as a whole, with the necessary subordinate staff to assist him in the discharge of his responsibilities. This officer, whose responsibilities will be largely organizational, may belong to the Education Department. But he will have to coordinate the resources of all government departments if the programme is to succeed.

Once this officer is in position, the next thing to decide upon is the centres where the programme will start. As has been stated above, the centre will have to be some educational institution – either a college or a secondary school or even a primary or middle school. Ultimately, all these institutions will have to be involved. But to begin with, the district officer will have to take a quick survey and select a few institutions where the necessary leadership and interest is available. He might begin with about fifty to a hundred centres in a district. These may be spread in all parts of the district or may be selectively located in a few community

development blocks.

Once the centres are selected, the next step would be to survey the local needs as well as the available resources. The survey of needs will include contacting every young person in the age-group 15-25 who is out of school and asking him whether he would like to continue his education and, if so, what his principal interests and convenient times are. The survey of available resources will include collecting full information about all the institutional and human resources available in the community that could be utilized, on a part-time basis, for a programme of this type. If the survey is properly carried out (and the personnel carrying out the survey could be quickly trained in a workshop of about ten to fifteen days), a picture of a programme for the locality will emerge. It will be the young persons who are interested in further education, the type of training they need, and also the local agencies that can be mobilized. It will then also be possible to work out the financial estimates. These will obviously vary from place to place and also depend considerably upon the type of programme to be evolved.

In planning the programmes, the key factors are elasticity and an earnest effort to get a 'fit' between the needs of the individual and the facilities provided for him. While in theory an attempt has to be made to meet, as individually as possible, the needs of the different categories of youth, in practice it will generally mean that certain 'group needs' will be identified and met in groups.

The overall attempt should be to provide, for each out-of-school youth, a programme of part-time education for one to two hours a day, five days a week, which will be equivalent to full-time education for three months in a year. In addition, he should be required to spend at least two weeks in full-time residential instruction. To begin with, the idea should be to get every out-of-school youth under the programme for a period of one year at least. Many of the young persons who are thus exposed will want to continue their studies further on an optional basis, and they should be given every encouragement to do so. Ultimately the programme should be able to provide about three years of such part-time education to all in this age-group.

Even in one year of part-time education, it is possible to include some upgrading of vocational skills, courses for functional

literacy where necessary, some general education in citizenship, family life education, and some provision for recreational and cultural activities. But something very worthwhile could be achieved if a young person were to continue under the programme for about three years.

The programmes for boys are comparatively easier to organize and the resources available for them, especially in terms of personnel, are larger. In the beginning, therefore, the programme will be largely meant for boys. But the importance of education for the girls should not be underrated and special efforts should be made, right from the start, to meet their needs.

While a beginning can thus be made with about fifty centres in a district, it should be possible to expand to about two hundred centres in three or four years, and the entire district can be intensively covered during the next decade.

We should begin with at least one district in every State and in at least one block in every Union Territory. The expansion will follow certain obvious lines. Every year, new districts or community development blocks may be added. In a district that has already been selected, new centres can be added; and in centres that are already established, attempts can be made to increase enrolments and to deepen and diversify the programmes. The target should be that at the end of the Fourth Plan we should bring under this programme about 10 per cent - nine million - of the total population of out-of-school youth. If funds do not permit, the target may be reduced by 50 per cent. At the end of the Fifth Plan, the attempt should be to cover about 50 to 60 per cent of the age-group at least for a minimum period of one year. This will of course be continued, on a voluntary basis, for as long a period as practicable.

It may be an advantage to have an advisory committee at the district level consisting of the respresentatives of all agencies and departments that will cooperate therein.

If this basic structure at the district level is properly developed, coordination at other levels will not present any serious problem. At the State level, there will have to be a special officer of the status of a Joint or Additional Director of Education to look after the programme. There may be an advantage in having a State-level coordination committee to assist him. At the Central level, we might have a similar coordinating committee of the

ministries concerned, with a special officer in charge of the programme located in the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare.